



# References Evaluations & Awards

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*CB&A Reference Notes*

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(note: these are reference notes prepared by Colin Baenziger & Associates)

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Ray Ambrose – Alderman, Davenport, IA 563-320-1042**

Mr. Ambrose was on the interview committee that hired Mr. Malin in 2001. Politics in Davenport are very rough and tumble. Mr. Malin's long tenure is impressive and he did many incredible things for the community. Davenport is the greatest city in the United States and is cutting edge in many areas, thanks to Mr. Malin. No one loves the city more than him. Mr. Ambrose considers Mr. Malin the best City Administrator in the country.

Mr. Malin developed a hiring process that is very thoughtful, thorough, and transparent. The entire community is involved in the process. He has hired exceptional employees and every department is nationally accredited. Davenport owns the #1 minor league baseball stadium and has the #1 minor league baseball team. The riverfront is rated #1 on the Mississippi River and #3 in the entire country. Mr. Malin met every standard there is and was visionary in developing a community that residents can be proud of.

Mr. Malin is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains operations at a high level of performance. One Alderman was not as competent on the computer and felt he was out of the loop. Everyone else felt that Mr. Malin's level of communication was incredible.

Davenport is included in the Quad Chamber of Commerce along with six other cities and these communities are very competitive in economic development. The Chamber lobbies for all the cities; Davenport is the largest of the six. Mr. Malin was a strong voice for the city. He is very politically astute and understands the dynamics of the cities and the chamber. Also, he worked very hard to develop a strong relationship with the public school system. He is very passionate and compassionate.

During Mr. Malin's tenure the city had seven record breaking floods. He improved flood protection and Davenport is now a national leader in flood preparedness and mitigation. He oversaw the Public Works department during a transition. The unions went three years without raises because employees were treated so well. They have the best trained, educated, and best city employees in the country.

Mr. Malin shared a great vision with the elected officials which they embraced. Most of the Aldermen have been on the Council for six to eight years, though they have been up for reelection every two years, which is an indication of how residents feel about the vision.

Mr. Malin put some concepts together for the state of Iowa and gained their support. He showed that a youth recreation center would fill 1,000 hotel rooms a week. The state has awarded the city with \$11 million dollars for the center and another 3.5 million for infrastructure. He is an incredible visionary and is always very positive.

Reference Notes  
Craig Malin

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Davenport would have an AAA rating if they had a state university, but their rating is very high due to Mr. Malin's leadership. He hired the individual who stepped in as the interim when he left. She has an incredible background and Mr. Malin saw something in her that others on the committee did not. They are fortunate to have her, every department has great leadership.

Because of the politics in Davenport some negative things have been written about Mr. Malin but if you look at the city and what he accomplished, you can see the quality of his leadership.

The same day that Mr. Malin stepped down in Davenport an individual called Mr. Ambrose to express his interest in hiring Mr. Malin to create a County administration system. They felt that Mr. Malin was the ideal person to head this project.

Anyone who hires Mr. Malin will have the best Administrator in the country. Mr. Ambrose is willing to discuss Mr. Malin with anyone interested. Every Council member signed a letter acknowledging what he did for the community. Mr. Ambrose wishes that Mr. Malin were still the Davenport Administrator.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Visionary,
- Thoughtful,
- Thorough,
- Transparent,
- Positive, and
- Energetic.

**Strengths:** Highly intelligent, incredible visionary, great father and husband, always involved with the youth and concerned about the schools, high energy level.

**Weaknesses:** He overcame any weaknesses that may have been present when he was first hired.

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**Gene Meeker – Alderman, Davenport, IA 563-343-4932**

Mr. Meeker was the Downtown Development Director when Mr. Malin was hired in 2001. Mr. Meeker was elected as an Alderman in 2007. Mr. Meeker has worked closely with Mr. Malin in both the private and public sector and has high regard for Mr. Malin and his abilities.

Mr. Malin always received high evaluations from the Council and Mayor. He managed the organization well. He works well with department heads and hired excellent employees. He is creative and a great writer. He kept the elected officials well informed so they could answer questions from the public. He worked long hours and seldom took time off. He is dedicated to his job, almost to a fault.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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Any Administrator that lasts fourteen years in Davenport makes good decisions. Mr. Malin was very organized. The way he directed projects and operations was impressive. He was a stickler for staying on the job and on the project. He was always available to the public and the Council when they had questions, needed direction, or wanted information. He presented information very well to smaller groups but could improve on making presentations to very large groups.

The new casino in Davenport was a \$110 or \$120 million dollar project which involved the planning department, the staff, and the Department of Transportation. Mr. Malin was very good at staying on target and meeting deadlines. The project received opposition from residents. He successfully worked through their concerns and the project is under construction.

Davenport has not raised property tax in four years which is unusual and can be directly attributed to Mr. Malin. He has great writing and grant skills, and procured state funding for projects. He redirected resources to the priorities established by the Council.

The location of the casino project mentioned earlier was controversial. Some in the community wanted the casino on the riverbank and others wanted it close to a major highway. The city received much public and diverse input. Mr. Malin led the process, negotiated the best deal, and secured a great location but not without citizen complaint and controversy.

Mr. Meeker is not aware of anything in Mr. Malin's background that would be considered embarrassing or controversial. Whoever hires Mr. Malin will have a manager who works hard and puts in many hours, but he is not a social animal who shakes hands and slap backs.

Mr. Malin never planned to retire in Davenport but he stayed long enough to bring the community to a point where the staff was top notch and the city was in a good financial condition. The public opposition to the casino wore on him and it was a good time for him to move to a new opportunity. Some residents are never happy but they cannot challenge his intellect or the results he achieved.

Mr. Meeker would hire Mr. Malin, he is an excellent manager. He knows the job and what has to be done. He identifies projects and looks for new ways to work. His management style is very refreshing. Because he enjoyed such a long tenure in Davenport some of the newly elected officials had higher expectations than what anyone can meet. If given a new opportunity Mr. Malin will employ the same energy. He is very qualified to lead any community.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Very intellectual,
- Great communicator,
- Attended meetings regularly,
- Never complained or criticized others in public,
- Well dressed and always neat, and
- Great family man.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Strengths:** Excellent at communication, keeps the Council informed on a regular basis. Always on the job, always on time, worked late.

**Weaknesses:** While he worked well with employees and business contacts, he did not appear to be comfortable joining community groups and attending social events. However, he always attended city functions and meetings pertaining to projects that the city was involved in, and he frequently organized these meetings.

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**Greg Lundgren – President, Ryan Construction, Davenport, IA 563-529-8013**

Mr. Lundgren and Mr. Malin met in 2001. Mr. Lundgren has sat on many hiring panels for department head positions and was the President of the Public Library Board for 17 years. He has seen Mr. Malin in different roles.

On a scale from 1 to 10 Mr. Malin's job performance is a 9+. He takes into the consideration where the community has been, where they are now, and where they can go. He helps residents understand the vision and has done a great job of guiding the community.

Mr. Malin helped elected officials with no previous experience understand development and creative financing alternatives like TIF's while exhibiting exemplary patience in the process. He used a number of people as sounding boards for issues and problems, which gave him alternative perspectives and solutions.

The City provided funding to the Library but Mr. Lundgren and the Board of Trustees managed operations. Mr. Malin was always supportive and worked well in this environment. He learned the personalities of the department heads and understood their responsibilities. He worked with them to set goals and then gave them the freedom to exercise their strengths and creativity.

Mr. Lundgren was on the hiring panel that selected the Public Works Director. The previous Director is one of his best friends. The committee chose three individuals. Mr. Malin wanted to hire the one who Mr. Lundgren felt was too militaristic. He had such a different personality from the previous Director that Mr. Lundgren could not imagine him in the role and was the only person on the committee to vote against this individual. About a year later Mr. Lundgren reluctantly sat on the panel to hire an Assistant Public Works Director. He had the opportunity to see a different side of this Public Works Director and realized that he had been wrong to vote against hiring him. Mr. Malin makes good decisions when selecting personnel.

Mr. Lundgren is on the hiring committee for Mr. Malin's replacement which has given him an opportunity to reflect on his performance. They had a good working relationship even when they did not agree. He hired employees whose experience and knowledge was a perfect complement to his skillset. Once decisions were made he moved past differences of opinion to carry out the will of the Council.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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When the Foundation wanted to build two additional libraries Mr. Malin attended every meeting with appropriate staff members to answer questions. He spoke on how the levy would impact tax payers and they sold the concept to residents. The libraries were 60% city funded and 40% foundation funded. The library bought a piece of land that was twice the size needed and Mr. Malin came up with a very sustainable approach to land use to sell the excess property, the money from the sale helped fund the project. When he showed Mr. Lundgren the plans prior to the public meeting Mr. Lundgren asked which of the city engineers and architects drew the plans. Mr. Malin smiled and replied that he had drawn them. He is a closet urban planner and enjoys determining the destiny of the community beyond the operational side.

At times Mr. Malin errs on the side of being too inclusive, which can sometimes take the train off the track, but his ability to be inclusive was very good for the community. He has good financial skills and hired excellent finance directors. He is very detailed. He has a good understanding of what departments need and what they can afford.

A casino was up for sale that blocked public access on the riverfront. The facility had fallen into disrepair and was overpriced so it did not sell. Mr. Malin wanted to open access to the riverfront and suggested that the city purchase it and then relocate it. Many residents were very opposed to the city owning a casino and Mr. Malin became the focal point for the controversy. Even though residents from surrounding communities that owned casinos shared the benefits of having one, the project was not approved. Later another developer bought 288 acres in a prime location and worked with Mr. Malin to move the casino to this development. Mr. Malin made it clear that the city needed to provide infrastructure for this deal. He was criticized by the elected officials and the public for spending those tax dollars but the elected officials were the ones to sign the agreement which clearly stated that the city would provide infrastructure. Mr. Malin was already considering separating from Davenport and it became clear that this was the right time to do so. The city lost real talent when he left.

Mr. Lundgren is not aware of any incident in Mr. Malin's past that would be embarrassing to an employer, he would hire Mr. Malin.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Thoughtful,
- Visionary,
- Energetic,
- Interactive,
- Inclusive, and
- Moves forward in the direction set by the Council.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Strengths:** Limitless energy, very thoughtful visionary.

**Weaknesses:** The majority of the time he is very patient and understanding when laying out the big picture because he understands that teaching and achieving buy-in takes time. However, when someone has pre-judged the situation and does not want to even consider the plan he can become frustrated.

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**Jason Gordon – Alderman, Davenport, IA 563-529-4468**

Mr. Gordon has known Mr. Malin since 2001. Mr. Gordon was elected to the Council in 2010 and worked closely with Mr. Malin until 2015. They have similar senses of humor and always worked well together.

Mr. Malin's job performance overall was excellent. He is extremely intelligent and hard working. Not many people can reach a resolution to a problem as efficiently or successfully as Mr. Malin. He is easy to work with.

By in large Mr. Malin made good decisions when hiring personnel though one hire was the exception. He tried to mentor the employee and when improvement did not occur he handled the separation well. He generally makes good decisions.

Mr. Malin came to an organization that was dysfunctional. Department heads had been in place for some time that either were not the best to begin with or were at a point in their career where their performance had declined. In a very short period of time he implemented new hires and increased efficiency. When he left, the organization was performing at the highest level in its history. He improved operations so much that he was able to invest time in other areas.

Mr. Malin could have been more engaged with the community and may have some introvert qualities. He did coach little league and participated in the Big Brother program. He was involved in activities that he felt passionate about. At times his presentation style was not received well by everyone in the group; however he is more than adequate at presenting material in a good, honest, and successful way.

The school district is a separate entity from the government. When Mr. Malin was hired the district was facing declining enrollment and other challenges, and their relationship with the city was adversarial. Mr. Malin was instrumental in building a strong relationship with the school leadership and the superintendent. They are now engaged in very specific conversations about ways they can partner. He nurtured the relationship to a strong and steady place.

Mr. Malin hired a great Finance Director and they worked well together. He is cognizant that raising taxes and fees is difficult for the elected officials. He successfully identifies alternative ways to overcome budgetary challenges. He completes tasks in a timely manner.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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Because Mr. Malin is a visionary and a change agent he has been involved in controversy. His ideas were not always well received by the public even though they were not controversial. Nothing in his background would embarrass an employer should the press investigate his past. At least one of the elected officials has a different opinion of Mr. Malin but the majority of them agree with Mr. Gordon's assessment.

A misunderstanding regarding a development agreement occurred between Mr. Malin, the corporate counsel and the city council. The best way to handle the situation was to provide Mr. Malin with a severance package and the support and well wishes of the Council. Mr. Gordon really values the years that Mr. Malin served in Davenport.

Mr. Gordon would hire Mr. Malin. He is an excellent choice for a city that needs improvements, wants more efficiency in government, and wants a visionary. He is highly competent and fully engaged. Mr. Gordon has not worked with anyone else who creatively addresses situations and challenges nearly as well as Mr. Malin.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Visionary,
- Efficient,
- Creative thinker,
- Extremely intelligent,
- Hard working, and
- Good financial acumen.

**Strengths:** Thinks creatively about challenges and issues, visionary, very efficient.

**Weaknesses:** While this trait is not a weakness, communication could be better at times. Because of his strengths he can be perceived as standoffish or indifferent though he is not actually standoffish or indifferent.

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**Bill Edmond – Alderman, Davenport, IA 563-271-2751**

Mr. Edmond was elected to the Davenport Council in 2008. Mr. Malin was the City Administrator and they worked together until 2015.

Mr. Malin is one of the hardest working and most intelligent people that Mr. Edmond has ever worked with. Davenport is the only city in the entire country that has all of its front line agencies nationally accredited, which is largely due to Mr. Malin's leadership.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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They had a great relationship; Mr. Malin's door was always open. The City could not have been nationally accredited without excellent department heads which is an indication of Mr. Malin's hiring ability. His decisions for the community in general are very good.

While Mr. Malin is a change agent and he maintains the organization at a high performance level, he is particularly innovative and not afraid to think outside the box. Mr. Edmonds shies away from discussing policy through email and Mr. Malin was very accommodating. Most of their communications were in-person conversations or phone calls.

Mr. Malin left the ribbon cuttings to the elected officials though he did attend community meetings. He works pretty well with the public and gave many power point presentations during council meetings. He was very good at answering questions by the council and public.

Mr. Malin is a leader. He spent a year and a half working to secure a really innovative state grant. Sales tax dollars would come back to the community in the form of an economic development grant. He worked day and night on this project and made trips to the capital to lobby for it. They received \$12 million dollars for the community.

Mr. Malin is customer service oriented and believes that the citizens are the customers. His financial skills are very strong. He always completes tasks in a timely fashion, even long painstaking work like the grant previously mentioned.

The owner of the minor league baseball team wanted to build a Ferris wheel outside the stadium. Mr. Malin immediately embraced the concept but it became controversial when residents felt it would degrade the park. They moved forward and this ballpark was voted the best park in the country. The following year the Ferris wheel was voted the best new addition to a ball park in the entire country. The Ferris wheel is now an icon on the river front and the residents love it.

Mr. Edmond cannot recall anything in Mr. Malin's background that would concern an employer. Mr. Malin separated from the community after the Mayor, who was afraid he would not be re-elected, shifted all blame to Mr. Malin and another senior employee. There will always be some residents who disapprove of what a city does and the Administrator is an easy target.

Mr. Edmond would hire Mr. Malin. He did a great job in Davenport.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Highly intelligent,
- Very hard working,
- Very motivated,
- Much attention to detail, and
- Leader.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Strengths:** Leadership.

**Weaknesses:** He is a workaholic. Mr. Edmond often emailed him at late at night thinking he would respond the next morning and received an immediate response.

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**Jeff Justin – Alderman, Davenport, IA 563-320-2037**

Mr. Justin was elected on the Davenport Council in 2007 and worked with Mr. Malin as the City Administrator until 2015. Mr. Justin is a longtime resident of the community and is a professional engineer. He understands the role of the Administrator and feels that Mr. Malin did a great job. On a personal note, he is a baseball coach and a good man.

Mr. Malin worked well with ten bosses, a challenging situation for any manager, and moved the city forward. Their interactions were very professional. Mr. Malin made good decisions both when hiring personnel and in general.

Mr. Malin is a manager who is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains operations at a high level. He kept the elected officials informed through a weekly briefing prior to the Council meeting.

Mr. Malin was often out in the community and attended community functions. He interacted well with the department heads and stake holders. He did not spend much time behind the desk but worked on different initiatives and the annual budget process. He was always moving the organization in the right direction.

During budget season Mr. Malin brought department heads together. He let the department heads manage their divisions but provided budget parameters and direction. He gave department heads the freedom to develop and execute their plan. His financial skills are very good. He completed work by the deadline.

Everything is controversial at the city level but nothing happened that specifically pertained to Mr. Malin. While some newspaper articles are negative, they do not have merit to them and are typical for the profession.

A disagreement occurred on how a development project should have been negotiated. Mr. Justin found no fault with Mr. Malin during the process but the Mayor felt there could have been better communication between the attorneys, the staff, and the Council. The development project was approved by every member of the Council. Some council members blame Mr. Malin but they are not taking personal responsibility for signing the agreement. This situation led to a discussion that it was time for Mr. Malin to move on and they agreed on a severance package. The process was amicable and the Council wishes him well.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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Mr. Justin would hire Mr. Malin; he was the best Administrator that Davenport ever had. He was the longest serving Administrator and worked endless hours to move the city further than it has ever been.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Passionate,
- Competent,
- Cares about the community,
- Well organized,
- Professional,
- Innovative, and
- Ethical.

**Strengths:** Very passionate, hard worker, very visionary, competent, moved the city forward.

**Weaknesses:** He is not the best communicator with the public. His thought processes are so advanced that he sometimes has difficulty communicating at lower levels.

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**Ed Winborn – Former Mayor, Davenport, IA 563-324-5463**

Mayor Winborn worked with Mr. Malin from 2006 to 2008. Mr. Malin accomplished a great deal and is an excellent City Manager – so it was a terrible loss for Davenport when he left.

The two men met on a daily basis because Mr. Malin believed in being a good communicator with his elected officials. Davenport has ten Aldermen plus the Mayor to whom the City Manager answers. Overall Mr. Malin had an excellent relationship with the elected officials except two Aldermen who were never happy with anything the staff did.

Mr. Malin may not be the best public speaker but he knows how to establish consensus among residents. He worked with various organizations in the community to address their concerns, and Mayor Winborn never received a complaint about Mr. Malin not being responsive.

Davenport's operations were modernized by Mr. Malin. He transformed garbage pickup from a two man handling system, to the mechanized, one driver method. He instituted storm water fees, which were unpopular at first, to help maintain the high quality of water. He was also heavily involved in the plans for the banks of the Mississippi River. These plans incorporated input from citizens and included the construction of four parks over 25 years. Davenport does not have a flood wall so Mr. Malin made sure the parks were designed to withstand any flooding.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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Mr. Malin also brought green technology to this Midwest City. The new police headquarters is an almost 75% green operation with plants growing on the roof. This project was expensive and difficult to sell to the residents, but Mr. Malin got the community engaged in developing the idea and gained their approval.

Mayor Winborn highly recommends Mr. Malin for a Manager position.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Visionary,
- Knowledgeable,
- Hardworking,
- Self-motivated,
- Nice, and
- Progressive.

**Strengths:** Forward thinking, modernized the city, and recruited quality employees.

**Weaknesses:** Does not sell himself to the public; so they do not realize all that he does for them.

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**Tara Barney – CEO, Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, IA 563-370-8078**

Ms. Barney worked with Mr. Malin from 2002 to 2015. Mr. Malin pushes for change and has made a difference in Davenport.

Davenport is the largest city in the Quad Cities area, and Mr. Malin has taken it upon himself to ensure that the City is a leader in innovation and economic development. He helped the Council rethink the City's relationship with the Mississippi River to view it as an opportunity to improve the quality of life and generate taxes. Many other City Managers whom Ms. Barney works with or has worked with are only able to see one aspect or the other, not both together. He pushes for good designs to be developed and brought in a level of aesthetics the region had so far lacked.

Mr. Malin gave good presentations and appropriately used power point programs. He is a phenomenal communicator. He frequently dropped by her office to inform her of a project or an issue. He paid attention to the residents and listened to them.

Under Mr. Malin's leadership the City's departments received their accreditation, a lengthy and intense process. He accomplished this due in large part to the professional and skilled team he built. When he interviews candidates he looks for individuals who are self-starters, who can interface with the community, and who can do their jobs with little oversight from him.

Mr. Malin was not involved in anything controversial or embarrassing in Davenport. He is frequently engaged in activities with his family and represented the City well.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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Mr. Malin will definitely make an exceptional Manager because he has proven himself capable with his work in Davenport.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Professional,
- Creative,
- Responsive to Council,
- First impression will be that he is reserved,
- Ethical, and
- Personable.

**Strengths:** Visionary, builds teams, communication, proactive, and takes advantage of Davenport's size to influence other cities in the region.

**Weaknesses:** Impatient with colleagues who do not want to accept innovation.

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**Tory Brecht – Former Reporter, Quad City Times, IA 563-888-2263**

Mr. Brecht was a reporter for Quad City Times from 2004 to 2011 during which period he met frequently with Mr. Malin and reported on events in Davenport. Mr. Malin is an intelligent and capable City Manager.

Mr. Malin has navigated both negative and positive relationships with elected officials. At one time a group of Councilmembers were against everything, and he was trying to push them to make changes. Despite their difference of opinions Mr. Malin worked well with them and always followed what the majority decided.

The Davenport staff is noticeably more professional and qualified than the group of employees Mr. Malin inherited. His preference is not simply to hire people who have experience in organizations of similar size, but rather he looks for people who are Assistant Directors in larger organizations and who have more experience and knowledge.

In the late 1980's Davenport experienced a massive decrease in its agricultural and manufacturing economy. When Mr. Malin came in 2001 the City was still trying to recover. He focused on urban renewal and invested a great deal of time and money in the redevelopment of the downtown which had become almost completely deserted. He also improved the City's bond rating and received good marks for how well he handled the debt.

Mr. Malin led the initial charge for Davenport Promise, a program which would have paid for students' college educations based on how long they had lived in the city. Some people questioned whether or not he should have been a proponent for a referendum they felt should

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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have come from the school district. Once the proposal was placed on the ballot Mr. Malin stepped back and allowed the school district the opportunity to take the lead. Unfortunately school district officials felt offended that the City was meddling in their business. They did not take a stand on the issue, and this lack of support led to the proposition being voted down. Had it been put in place, the referendum would have revolutionized the education system.

The only controversy Mr. Malin experienced involved employee raises. With the poor economy people were not overly pleased to see the government granting pay increases, even if such raises were warranted. One critic argued that the raises were excessive and raised a ruckus, but actually the Council had only approved a cost of living increase. Mr. Malin had done nothing wrong, and he cleared matters up quickly.

Public speaking is not Mr. Malin's strong suit. He is intellectual and sometimes talks over his audience's level of understanding. He needs to be more direct and simple in his explanations. However, he has always pushed for customer service and treated members of the public respectfully. He implemented a snow plow hotline and pothole link on the website which has allowed residents to have their problems addressed quickly and efficiently.

Mr. Malin has worked with a variety of Councils and personalities and always weathered the challenges very well. He made numerous improvements to the City, thus gaining the respect of many people. For these reasons Mr. Brecht recommends Mr. Malin as a Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Dry sense of humor,
- Outgoing,
- Intelligent, and
- Ethical.

**Strengths:** Forward thinking, not afraid to try new ideas, and accepts criticism.

**Weaknesses:** Not always as direct in his communication as he needs to be.

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**Jennifer Nahra – Communications Director, Davenport, IA 563-528-0358**

Ms. Nahra worked with Mr. Malin from 2001 to 2015. Ms. Nahra came from the private sector and wanted to work for Davenport because she thought the City was open-minded and operated in a can-do environment. However, this was not the case until Mr. Malin became City Manager. He reinvented the culture to become more accepting of innovation and technology.

Reference Notes  
Craig Malin

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Mr. Malin has worked with some challenging Councils which contained Aldermen who were never pleased with the staff. During one election all but one Alderman ran unopposed, which illustrated how well the City functioned.

Mr. Malin is an excellent communicator. He keeps the staff and Council well informed. He has improved his public speaking abilities tremendously. Previously he tended to speak to an audience as though they were at his same level of knowledge, which they were not. He is a visual person; so he uses videos, photographs, and power point presentations. He has learned to consider his audience and therefore organizes his information into a storyline that everyone is able to understand.

Customer service is uppermost on Mr. Malin's agenda. He developed a portion of the City's website for people to report potholes and obtain a response within 48 hours. When he came to the City he made it clear that all efforts were to be professional from how phones were answered to making City Hall more inviting by having the doors to offices open whenever possible. He has taken his dedication to customer service to the extreme. At one time the building's roof was being repaired, and an intense smell permeated the offices so much that he sent all the staff home. However, he remained behind and sat outside City Hall just in case any residents came by and needed help.

Mr. Malin initiated technological changes which were challenging because most people had the opinion that, if what they were using at the time was working, why change it. He sympathized with their attitude; so, he determined that he try the new system first. If he found it to be better, then the rest of the staff would follow. He has altered the employees' opinions on change. They now embrace innovation and look for new technology and new approaches themselves.

Mr. Malin has hired exceptional employees. He seeks out people who have a clear understanding of team work, have a can-do attitude, are committed to customer service, and thoroughly understand their responsibilities.

On top of the internal changes Mr. Malin has made he has revolutionized the City physically. He renovated the John O'Donnell baseball stadium which is one of the oldest in the country. This work saved the stadium from flooding and helped retained the minor league team contract as a result. He put in place a public participation process bringing forward ideas on the riverfront visioning. Thousands of people provided their input on what they would like to see happen with the land along the Mississippi River. One source of stress for the City has been the lack of a flood wall along the river banks. Mr. Malin used this to the City's advantage and has created plans for parks which have been designed to prevent flooding.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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Several years ago a female Administrative Assistant for the elected officials filed a sexual harassment complaint against one of the elected officials. She later filed a complaint against Mr. Malin and the Human Resources Director stating they were not proceeding quickly enough with an investigation. The City offered a settlement to this employee, and the issues were resolved. [CB&A Note: This incident is described in more detail in the Internet Research we have provided for Mr. Malin.]

Mr. Malin is a phenomenal boss. If a person were to lay a picture of Davenport in 2001 next to a picture of the City in 2015 the changes are remarkable. He left his mark on the community and is a fantastic City Manager.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Family man,
- Energetic,
- Always in a hurry,
- Sense of humor,
- Loves baseball, and
- Quick witted.

**Strengths:** Builds consensus, intelligent, and technology savvy.

**Weaknesses:** He moves so quickly that other people involved fall behind because they do not have the same background on the issues that he does.

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**Cheri Rigdon – City Council Assistant, Davenport, IA 563-349-1208**

Ms. Rigdon worked with Mr. Malin from 2002 to 2015. He is an amazing City Administrator.

Mr. Malin met with the City Council once a week to go over timelines and progress reports on projects. He was the Council's rudder for keeping them on track and reminding them of their goals. Occasionally the elected officials had a hard time seeing his vision for the future, but they usually caught on eventually and agreed with his recommendations.

Customer service is essential to Mr. Malin. He worked with community groups and residents; no one received preferential treatment. An additional positive trait is that Mr. Malin is not political. He focused on what is best for the City rather than being sidetracked by the political ramifications of decisions.

Mr. Malin quickly identifies problems and finds solutions. Once he has all of the facts he goes to the elected officials for their approval. He provides them with background information and offers his opinion. He is also supportive of his staff and gives them the chance to improve

## Reference Notes Craig Malin

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themselves through training and workshops. In the nine years she has known him, Ms. Rigdon has never heard him raise his voice or admonish an employee in public. Several Directors now on staff chose to come to Davenport because of the changes he has instituted in the City.

During his time in Davenport he has built two new library branches, received accreditation of the City's departments, and initiated the rebuilding of downtown. Davenport's downtown area has become a destination, accomplished by applying millions of dollars of local, State, and County money to projects with the supportive input of residents.

Mr. Malin has a vision for the types of amenities the City needs to offer for children. He led the push for the construction of a skateboard park, which was hotly debated. Some residents argued it would encourage bad behavior and were prone to place negative stereotypes on skateboarders. However, he went out into the community to make his case and received the majority vote to proceed. Since the park has been built many who initially opposed the project now love it.

Mr. Malin is not a back slapping 'yes' man who goes out of his way to say hello to everyone in the office. He has been called aloof for that. In reality, he is simply too busy and concerned about getting things done. He never complains, no matter how intense a situation becomes.

If not for Mr. Malin's efforts, Ms. Rigdon believes Davenport would still be suffering from the 1980's drop in the economy. He encompasses all attributes of a phenomenal manager. Ms. Rigdon definitely recommends him for a Manager position.

### Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:

- Bright,
- Positive,
- Fair,
- Quick study,
- Professional,
- Gracious, and
- Does not take things personally.

**Strengths:** Has a vision for the future of the community, knows how projects are progressing at all times, and is a gifted writer.

**Weaknesses:** He has been criticized for not attending some community group meetings; however, Ms. Rigdon thinks his approach may be good so long as he does not develop a bias towards one group over others.

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**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Mike Bladel – Former Police Chief, Davenport, IA 515-284-6422**

Mr. Bladel worked for Mr. Malin from 2001-2007 at which time Mr. Bladel became a presidential appointed U.S. Marshall. Mr. Malin was a phenomenal City Administrator.

Mr. Malin worked through some of the most difficult times with some of the most difficult Councils. He did a fantastic job of maintaining a positive relationship with the elected officials and getting things done. To illustrate just how tough things were with the Council, other cities in the state would record Davenport's City Council meetings to use it to show prospective businesses how dysfunctional the city was and lure them away from Davenport to their cities. Despite this turmoil he had a long tenure as City Administrator, which is quite a feat.

Mr. Malin was supportive of his staff. At one point one of the Councilmembers disagreed with a decision Mr. Bladel made and tried to fire him. Luckily Mr. Malin understood the lines of authority and refused to fire him despite intense pressure to do so. He instilled in his employees the importance of customer service. He made sure that the department heads were out in the public armed with facts and ready to deliver the city's messages.

Davenport went through budget cuts, layoffs and a general shrinkage of government during this time. Mr. Malin met often with the senior management to keep the lines of communication open and dispel fear.

Mr. Malin achieved a great deal of success, a few of his successes include building a new Police Department facility, upgrading various parts of the infrastructure, building two libraries and overcoming tough union negotiations.

Regrettably Mr. Malin got caught in a "gotcha" game with a Councilmember. The department heads receive annual cost of living raises automatically while Mr. Malin's raises must be approved by the Council. One year the Human Resources Director made a mistake and instated his raise prior to the Council's approval. This Councilmember, who was never satisfied with anything, overreacted and accused Mr. Malin of stealing. The mistake was soon discovered and he was found to have done nothing inappropriate.

Mr. Bladel highly respects Mr. Malin and recommends him for a Manager position. He did a great job for the city.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Eye on the ball at all times,
- Engaging,
- Never burns out,
- Not a glad-hander,
- Family man, and
- Never has a bad day.

**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Larry Laschen – Former Village Manager, Vernon Hills, IL 815-334-1784**

Mr. Laschen worked with Mr. Malin from 1988 to 1999. Mr. Malin was reliable and one of the best employees Mr. Laschen had during his long career in local government.

Mr. Malin was so reliable that, when he was Assistant to the Manager, Mr. Laschen began giving him assignments which normally would have been given to the Assistant City Manager. It did not take long to promote him to the position of an additional Assistant City Manager. Unfortunately this promotion offended the existing Assistant City Manager, who later quit.

Vernon Hills dealt with several sensitive subjects because the Village was the fastest growing suburb of Chicago, and one group of residents held anti-growth sentiments. One issue concerned the development of a new subdivision between two existing subdivisions. Mr. Malin met with area residents and offered them options for what the new subdivision might look like. He showed them pictures of the various homes and apartments proposed and took a vote on which ones they were prepared to see constructed. By including them in the process he got them to accept the project more readily.

On another issue Mr. Malin was put in charge of acquiring land for a new alley. He went to each homeowner in the neighborhood and clearly outlined the benefits. Eventually the homeowners ceded to the City the land it needed to build the alleyway.

Mr. Malin puts in the time and effort to do his job well. He is not lacking in any area. Therefore Mr. Laschen easily recommends Mr. Malin for a Manager position.

**Words or phrases used to describe Craig Malin:**

- Innovative,
- Intelligent,
- Enthusiastic,
- Takes pride in his work,
- Hardworking, and
- Self-starter.

**Strengths:** Dependable, completes tasks on time, and delivers a quality product.

**Weaknesses:** At the time they worked together he was young and did not have a great deal of experience, but surely by now this is no longer an issue.

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**Reference Notes  
Craig Malin**

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**Strengths:** Long term planning, respectful, tenacious, gets people to work together and makes things happen.

**Weaknesses:** None offered.

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**Candace Fitzgerald –Former Human Resources Director, Douglas County, WI  
715-349-2181**

Ms. Fitzgerald worked with Mr. Malin from 1999 to 2001. Mr. Malin was a strong Administrative Coordinator.

In Wisconsin the Administrative Coordinator does not have the authority to hire or fire, and all employment issues must be brought to the large thirty person board of elected officials. This Board was not ready for progressive leadership and would not allow Mr. Malin to implement projects he thought would improve the community. The County also had strong unions in place which prevented him from completing any project on time, even those he was allowed to do.

Mr. Malin has an extensive knowledge base which helped him when he had to make presentations to residents. He spoke clearly and effectively. He was also an excellent communicator one-on-one.

During his time in Douglas County a Latino gang began to form and bombed the District Attorney's home in an effort to intimidate him because one of its members was on trial for murder. Not afraid to take a stand, Mr. Malin orchestrated a march through town. At the end of the march a Congressman spoke about taking back the community. The gang member on trial was found guilty and, soon afterwards, the remaining gang members fled the County.

Mr. Malin was not generally involved in construction projects. However, one project had become out of control, and he was asked by the contractor to help. The costs for a planned office building were skyrocketing, the design was constantly changing, and the whole project was way off course. Mr. Malin stepped in, worked with the contractor to set a fixed design, and helped get the building completed much quicker than anticipated. Many issues concerning this project arose due to a lack of leadership from the Finance Director. This person was allowing contractors to run bills through the County so they could avoid having to pay taxes. Mr. Malin was unable to convince the Board to fire this Finance Director; so he resigned.

Mr. Malin did all he could and gave the County the two years he had promised. If Ms. Fitzgerald had been in his position, she might have left after just a few months. He has the ability and vision to get things done. She highly recommends Mr. Malin for a City Manager position.

**Words or phrases used to describe Mr. Malin:**

- High energy level,
- Knowledgeable,

## Craig Malin Reference Notes

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- Outgoing,
- Capable, and
- Dedicated.

**Strengths:** Progressive and smart.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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### **Rand Wonio – Local Attorney, Davenport, IA 563-324-3246**

Mr. Wonio has worked with Mr. Malin since about 2005, but he knew Mr. Malin by reputation prior to that. On occasion Mr. Wonio has been hired by the City of Davenport to represent them on civil cases, at which times he interacted with Mr. Malin. Mr. Malin has shown himself to be a great leader for the organization.

Mr. Malin takes time out of his busy schedule to keep Mr. Wonio informed. He has a knack for getting to the heart of a matter and addressing it. He has not been involved in anything controversial.

Some of Mr. Malin's most noted accomplishments include: revamping the minor league baseball stadium, improving flood control, and making improvements to the downtown area. The downtown district has now experienced a surge of new development with commercial, residential, and mixed use construction.

Mr. Malin will make a great City Manager.

### **Words or phrases used to describe Mr. Malin:**

- Genuine,
- Hardworking,
- Sense of humor,
- Team player,
- Dignified, and
- Has the best interests of the City at heart.

**Strengths:** Intelligent, resourceful, personal skills, and comes up with interesting, unique ideas.

**Weaknesses:** None identified.

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**Completed by:** Emilee Anderson, Colin Baenziger & Associates

# City Administrator

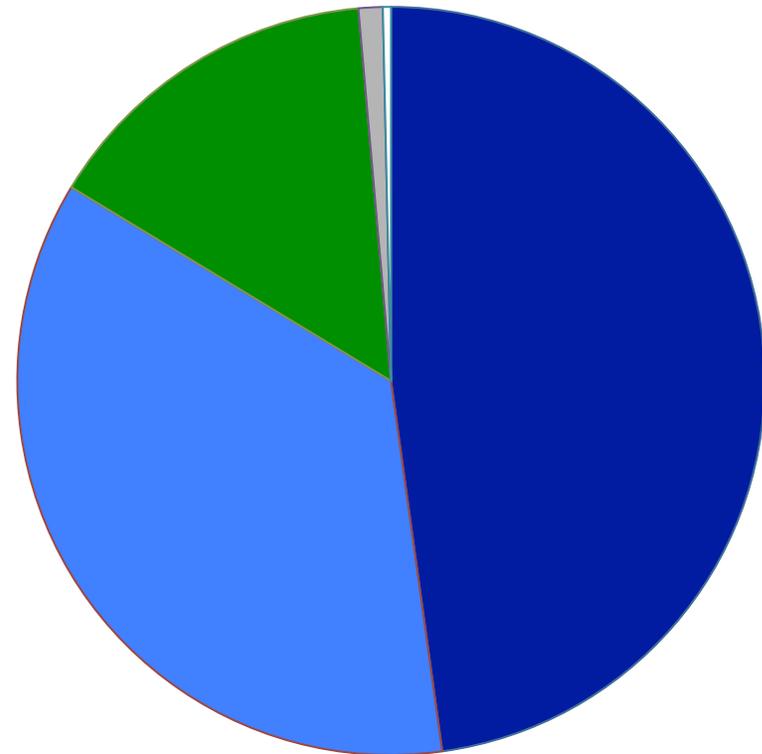
## Craig Malin

January, 2014

### Evaluation Summary

#### Evaluation Categories

- Leadership
- Communications
- Accessibility
- Relationship Building
- Resource Management



■ Consistently Excellent    ■ Very Strong  
■ Competent, Solid    ■ Under Developed  
□ Not Developed

Overall Point Distribution



ICMA Professional Development Planning Assessment  
International City/County Management Association

12/31/2012

Single Participant: Craig Malin

**Strengths**

**These are the top behaviors or practices identified by at least 50% of the respondent groups:**

Initiative, Risk Taking, Vision, Creativity and Innovation

Integrity

Strategic Planning

Democratic Advocacy and Citizen Participation

Performance Management and Quality Assurance

Functional and Operational Expertise and Planning

Technological Literacy

Challenge people to identify non-traditional, innovative solutions to solve on-going problems

Identify the consequences of policies to the larger community rather than to a select group

Media Relations / Presentation Skills

Adhere to the ICMA Code of Ethics

Propose alternative financing methods to diversify the community's financial resources

Financial Analysis

Human Resources Management

**Developmental Needs**

**These are the top behaviors or practices identified by at least 50% of the respondent groups:**

None

## Open Ended Questions

### What could this local government manager **START DOING** to work more effectively with you?

Become more active in the community as time allows.

Take more personal time off from work to re-energize.

Craig is knowledgeable, creative, analytical, and a team builder and team player. As far as my working relationship with him, I do not see anything that he needs to improve.

Dedicate more time to personally participating in and understanding the needs of the region as well as the city he serves so very well. His talent is huge and would benefit the city he serves more if a portion of his time were invested in bringing the region along.

### What could this local government manager **STOP DOING** to work more effectively with you?

I do not see any area to improve.

I can think of nothing in this category.

Nothing

Little comes to mind. He is the best story-teller and communicator I have ever worked with in the public sector and my career is long in both the public and private sector. He is brilliant, strategic, absolutely committed to his profession and the future of the City of Davenport. With those who do not know him well, the common impression is that he is indeed very good at what he does, and several steps ahead of the pack, sometimes to his detriment.

### What could this local government manager **CONTINUE DOING** to work effectively with you?

Open communication is the key to continuing to work effectively together.

Continue to involve all department managers in a weekly meeting and continue to learn about the inner and inter-workings of each department and how those affect the community.

He should continue to bring best practices to our community and to challenge his staff, elected officials and community partners to explore new ideas and opportunities on behalf of the citizens of Davenport. And he should continue public presentations and speaking; it is a strength. His communication skills are extraordinary.

He should continue to be visionary and never be reluctant to share such vision with me.

Continue to be honest in presenting proposals, programs and financial information to Council and public.

Provide his ideas and energy to strengthen my organization.

### **Additional comments**

Overall I find Craig Malin to be an exemplary, visionary city manager and would not want him to be less so or revert to becoming a caretaker bureaucrat of the City rather than a visionary. I appreciate his leadership on so many different issues. My guess is that many chief administrators just do the very least rather than continuing to be out front on major concerns. He clearly has the best interests of the City of Davenport at heart.

Nothing at this time.

Superior writing and conceptual planning skills.

Craig has been a staunch supporter of our department and is a great visionary for our city. I appreciate how he is pulled in many directions by the Mayor and City Council as well as the department managers. He has been responsible for many positive projects to our community which will benefit its citizens for years in the future.

He is a total professional and has set the bar for the region. The leadership he has shown in building accreditation and professionalism within his direct reports is an absolute strength. His skill at selecting independent thinkers and managers of public resources allows him the flexibility to "think forward" on behalf of the City and it is much appreciated. There are few people I would rather work with year over year to build a community.

I think he does a great job. As it should be, he makes service to your community exciting.

Extremely bright and understands function of city government. Good grasp of budget issues. Provides very easy access to his office and electronic media.

Very good writer and communicator.

Go Cubs.

# Performance Evaluation Summary

**June, 2011**



## Negative Performance Measures (0)

**Composite Score 0 – 1**

None

## Positive Performance Measures (14)

**Composite Score 1 – 1.5**

Tasks Completed On / Ahead of Schedule  
Recognizes Personal Mistakes  
Solutions Relevant & Practicable  
Responsible & Calm Under Stress  
Verbal & Interpersonal Communication Skills  
Represents City Well  
Employs Diversity of Thought & Experience  
Addresses Personal & Work Unit Performance Issues  
Evaluates Performance  
Trusted Across Organization & Community  
Accomplished, Inclusive Communicator  
Informs Others Rapidly, Equitably & Civilly  
Implements Council Directives With Vigor  
Maintains Progress On All Council Goals

## Very Positive Performance Measures (30)

**Composite Score 1.5+**

Work Ethic  
Follows Policies & Adheres to Deadlines  
Demonstrates Care  
Positive Attitude, Works Diligently  
Written Communication Skills  
Electronic Communication Skills  
Builds Consensus, Encourages Team Solutions  
Supports Equal Opportunity  
Offers Effective, Efficient Solutions  
Work Product is Accurate & Comprehensive  
Assesses Situation Appropriately  
Willingly Accepts Responsibility  
Recognizes Potential Problems  
Public Service Orientation  
Exceeds Citizen Service Expectations  
Plans, Delegates & Directs Work Unit Tasks  
Maintains Open Communications  
Puts Needs of Others Above His Own  
Revenue Optimized & Diversified  
Pursues Productivity Enhancement  
Open, Inclusive Operations  
Progressive Problem Solver  
Leader Within Community & Profession  
Builds Staff & Operational Capacity  
Agile & Responsive  
Promptly Reactive & Methodically Proactive  
Directs Staff Toward Accountability & Excellence  
Positions City to Secure Goals  
Improves Service Quality Through Performance Mgmt.  
Demonstrably Improves Perception of Davenport

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Overall Score</b>   | <b>1.63</b> |
| <b>Self Eval Score</b> | <b>1.0</b>  |
| <b>2008 Eval</b>       |             |
| <b>Overall Score</b>   | <b>1.27</b> |
| <b>Self Eval Score</b> | <b>.97</b>  |

### **Strengths:**

These are the top behaviors or practices identified by at least 50% of the respondents:

- Initiative, risk taking, vision, creativity, innovation
- Strategic planning
- Budgeting
- Financial analysis
- Policy facilitation
- Setting goals consistent with the organizational mission
- Demonstrating an understanding of budgeting principles and practices
- Positioning the organization for events and circumstances that are anticipated in the future
- Identifying local government revenue sources
- Identifying the long term effects of short term decisions
- Developing policy recommendations that take account of community complexities and interrelationships

### **Developmental Needs**

These are the top behaviors or practices identified by at least 50% of the respondents:

- None

### **Narrative Comments**

- I have worked in local government for the better part of my adult life. I have personally worked with people who claim to be administrators and ones who are administrators. Without question or hesitation Craig Malin tops my list of effective city administrators. His drive and ambition are key qualities needed to build a culture of success within the organization. I have the utmost respect for the man for all he was put through by a dysfunctional city council and still maintained the presence of moving this city forward. Thank you for allowing me to comment.

- Craig is a very professional Administrator who works well with the Council. The City is fortunate to have his services and knowledge. He excels in driving the community toward new visionary projects and financing alternatives. Works long hours and readily available to the staff, Council and public. It is privilege to work with him as a Council member.
- Craig is a wonderful cheerleader for the City of Davenport. He is passionate about his City being the best it can be, now and in the future.
- City Administrator Craig Malin is a dedicated professional who consistently strives to engage citizens in their local government. His integrity, work ethic and commitment to citizens, elected officials and staff is exceptional. The Davenport community is a far better place because of his service.
- Mr. Malin does a good job as city administrator. The city of Davenport is lucky to have him. He has proven, on multiple occasions, to have the ability to work through some rather difficult situations, while keeping the best interests of the city in mind. He isn't perfect in all of his decisions, like all of us, but he gives his best effort on a daily basis. I look to him as a role model and admire him because he has one of the toughest jobs out there. It is easy to be an armchair quarterback and second guess the person at the head of the organization, but he makes the right decision for the community 90% of the time, which I would guess is a much higher average than the typical administrator.



# Mayor & City Council

## Performance Evaluation Summary

**10/18/08**

**Negative Performance Measures – None**

### Positive Performance Measures

**(Composite Score 1 – 1.5)**

Tasks On / Ahead Of Schedule  
Willingly Accepts Responsibility  
Appropriately Assesses Situations  
Supports Diversity  
Revenue Sources Diverse & Optimized  
Enhanced Productivity With Improved Services  
Operations Are Open & Inclusive  
Progressive Problem Solver  
Plans, Delegates, Directs Work  
Skilled Communicator  
Agile In Anticipation & Response To Issues  
Promptly Reactive & Methodically Proactive  
Informs Council Without Distortion Or Delay  
Implements Council Policy With Vigilance  
Maintains Progress On City Goals  
Improves Service Quality  
Responsive & Professional  
Positions City To Secure Goals & Succeed

### Very Positive Performance Measures

**(Composite Score 1.5 – 2.5)**

Work Ethic  
Follows Policies & Adheres To Deadlines  
Demonstrates Care  
Positive Attitude, Works Diligently  
Work Product Professional, Complete  
Solutions Presented Are Relevant, Practical  
Writes Well  
Electronic Communication Skills  
Recognizes Problems, Anticipates Implications  
Responsible, Calm Under Stress  
Represents City Well & Faithfully  
Leader In Community & Profession

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Overall Score 1.27

Self Eval Score .97



City of Davenport  
Edwin G. Winborn, Mayor

December 17, 2007

Craig Malin  
City Administrator  
City Hall  
Davenport, IA. 52801

Dear Craig:

This letter will summarize the City Council's evaluation of your performance for the 2006 – 2007 Council term. While the 2006 – 2007 City Council was often politically and personally divided, every alderman except one provided a positive review of your performance. As reviewed with you on November 15, the overall composite score of your evaluation was very good, with each of the forty two performance indicators having a positive composite score.

The overall consensus of the Council was that you were instrumental in maintaining community progress through the last two years. A summary of city achievements is attached. Most notably, Davenport's population is on the rise following decades of prior decline, crime was reduced 18% in the last two years, the first significant operating levy reduction in over a decade was achieved and Davenport had its best year ever in job creation. Organizational improvements continued with accrediting major departments, overhauling the City website, implementing an organization wide customer service program and undertaking a complete revamp of the City's underlying finance and management information systems. Intergovernmental relations are positive, with particularly strong relations with Scott County, Davenport School District and our federal partners. Through your direct efforts, Davenport was recognized as Iowa's largest "Great Place" and the nation's "Most Livable Small City" in 2007.

Your strengths include dedication to public service, exceptional work ethic, strategic vision, operational team building and intelligence. More than one Council member remarked on your apparent love of cities, the city management profession and Davenport. Council members also agreed that your positive attitude, spirit of resilience and untiring professionalism were key leadership traits that helped the organization through some difficult trials and tribulations these past two years. Your problem solving capacity, optimism and belief in a better Davenport sometimes places you a little further down the road, a little faster than others, as issues are discussed. As a life long Davenport resident, my perspective is your ability to see a more positive future and work with others to achieve a community vision is a particular strength, and well suited to Davenport's needs.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank you for sticking with Davenport through two years that were at times difficult. Your commitment to the community and the ideals of professional, progressive local governance is evident, and you have served Davenport well. With a quarter century of elective service to this community, it is my experience that, with time, memories of working with those who positively contribute to the community and organization will prevail.

On behalf of those positively contributing to Davenport, thank you, and best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Winborn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "E".

Ed Winborn, Mayor

# Davenport 2006 – 2007

- Community Wide Progress
  - Population on rise – following almost two decades of decline
  - Crime trending downward
  - First significant operating tax levy reduction in more than a decade
  - Best year in city assisted job creation / retention in memory
- Successful Community Investments
  - Fairmount Library, Skatepark, Police Station opened
  - Locust, Northwest Blvd. reconstruction, 67<sup>th</sup> construction, Downtown resurfacing
  - Sunderbruch Park opened, Prairie Heights Park in progress
  - Rail to EICC in progress
- Outside Investment Secured
  - Swing sale
  - Multiple adaptive re-use
    - Freight House, Salvation Army, lofts, Taylor School (in progress)
- Organizational Achievements / Improvements
  - Meeting national standards
    - Public Works accredited, Police re-accredited, Fire strategic plan completed, accreditation in progress
  - Process Improvements
    - ERP underway, GEMS / customer service training increased
    - Major technology advances
  - Team Building / Renewal
    - Successful recruitments for C&ED Director, Management Analyst, succession planning for department head positions
- Neighborhood Revitalization
  - Police added, NETS expanded
  - Fire CSD and Parks HQ relocated in SOLO neighborhood
  - Parks “People in Motion” program
  - HAPPEN / Community Partnership / 100 Homes programs
  - Neighborhood Services Specialist, Nuisance Attorney added
- Planning For The Future
  - Diversion Tunnel designed / ready for construction funding
  - “East Village” Zoning, Downtown Design Guidelines
  - Open riverfront planning processes
  - “Promise” community conversation underway
- Intergovernmental Success
  - Significant State & Federal lobbying success
  - Consolidated Dispatch agreement approved
- State / National Recognition
  - Iowa’s largest “Great Place”
  - Most Livable Small City in Nation



## City of Davenport

Charles W. Brooke, Mayor  
cwb@ci.davenport.ia.us

December 1, 2005

Craig T. Malin  
City Hall  
Davenport, IA 52801

Dear Craig:

This letter is the written report of your performance review for the past year, essentially the calendar year of 2005 (although some items mentioned were multi-year projects/efforts). The entire City Council and I met on November 16, 2005 to discuss your performance. With our weak mayor 10-alderman 2-year term system I am not sure that anyone knows well all that you do, but the mayor is in the best position to know. It is unfortunate that the council members, as part time workers often focused on very particular issues, are not in a good position to see much of what you do or gauge how well you do it. As expected there were critiques of a few of your actions, but they were minor (excepting one council member who was totally unrealistically negative) and hence not worthy of mention here, and you anticipated most of them in your self-evaluation.

The discussion below is organized into categories of effort. In general and overall the conclusion that you were doing an excellent job as city administrator was nearly unanimous.

**Building Partnerships.** One of your strong points is building partnerships. The cooperation of the City with the chamber of commerce and with other governmental entities has improved from occasional to thriving. We have excellent relations with everyone these days. You also have been exemplary in your courtesy and patience with some of the most trying people and citizens I have ever met. You have encouraged the creation of citizen groups to help and interact with the City (the HPGW and CAI). The City is exploring joint ventures with the county and other cities in a Blue Ribbon panel in large measure guided by you. We are partnering with Rock Island on River Vision implementation. We have a number of boards, commissions and task forces of many citizens, many of which depend on your guidance. We have made a number of bold decisions (River Vision, Prairie Heights, casino hotel, etc.) after extensive public participation designed by you. We also communicate frequently with our state and federal lawmakers and staffs, often with agendas and talking points prepared by

226 West Fourth Street • Davenport, Iowa 52801  
Telephone: 563-326-7701 Fax: 563-328-6726 TDD: 563-326-6145  
[www.cityofdavenportiowa.com](http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com)

“...where the Mississippi River *Celebrates!*”

you. You have also done your best to encourage teamwork from what at times has been a fractious, contentious city council.

**Strengthening Economic Development.** The City has thrived in recent years, in the last 4 years increasing its assessed value property from \$4 billion to \$5 billion. The groundwork for future economic growth has been laid. The infrastructure investment was doubled. There is a new comprehensive plan. There are the first new class A downtown office buildings in 20 years. There have been advances in transforming some of our brownfields. Prairie Heights park is underway and Prairie Heights subdivision is close behind. The lofts in downtown have multiplied and their impact is spreading. Abandoned housing has been attacked with a City/citizens group and the HAPPEN program was initiated. The tax exemption for urban revitalization was expanded. A market district and other downtown improvements are being planned with the partnering of D-1.

**Opening Processes.** You have been a leader in opening the City's work to the public. You organized citizen oriented planning for Prairie Heights, River Vision, the casino hotel, and several parks. You caused more meetings to be televised. You included council members on interview panels, in the CIP planning, in labor negotiations, and on many teams. You have been open and transparent to citizens and to the media, supplying a huge amount of documents and information.

**Improving Finances.** There have been many efforts to improve the City's financial posture in spite of national economics and state politics. You have addressed a potential multi-year deficit of \$20+million. You helped the Council to diversify revenue with non-tax sources. You have reduced the payroll by 60+/- FTE positions without significant service impacts. Your union negotiating team obtained the first health insurance payments from unions. The bond rating outlook was upgraded. A fiscal impact model was created.

**Professionalizing and Improving Public Safety.** You have been instrumental in improving our police and fire departments. The police department is one of largest in the Midwest and few around here accredited. The fire department is beginning the same process. Innovations have been implemented and begun--Crime Control Strategy (CCS) / NETS / VIPS. Red light, speed and neighborhood cameras have been installed or are planned. Reorganizations to improve efficiency and effectiveness have been done (shift overlap / beat realignment / civilianization). There have been facilities and equipment upgrades and a new \$19M police station is underway.

**Enhancing Quality of Life.** You are committed to and have achieved significant progress in improving the quality of life here. The River Renaissance plan has been implemented and parts of it (the River Music Experience, the Figge, the Skybridge, the New Ventures Center)

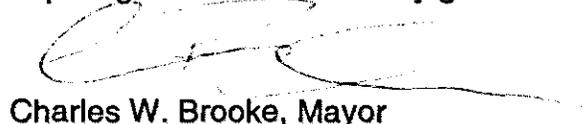
are complete. Our new John O'Donnell stadium is magnificent, after mouldering for decades before your arrival. Our first branch library is set to open soon, expanding services into a new part of town and significantly improving our library services in an underserved part of town. Davenport has made extensive ADA improvements under Project Civic Access all over town. We have adopted the first comprehensive plan in decades. We have enhanced recreation and neighborhood services under your direction. Our citizens recognize the significant overall service delivery improvement (survey). The groundwork is in place for great strides in the future throughout Davenport, with the Great Places outline and the RiverVision plans.

**Focusing on Performance.** You have been focused on performance and not on extraneous measures. The department head evaluations are current. Seven department heads have been recruited. The City's technology needs have elevated to departmental status. There are improved accountability / discipline standards. You have been supportive of employee development. You have improved training and employee recognition programs. Roughly half of the new dept heads are internal. You implemented better tuition reimbursement and nominated employees for professional recognition. There has been an emphasis on positive feedback. Succession planning is underway.

**Promoting Environmental Stewardship.** You have also been very active in promoting environmental stewardship here. The City worked hard to obtain its NPDES permit / local limits. Major parks have been added or improved. The police HQ has been designed as a LEEDS building. The City is proceeding to convert to volume-based waste collection. TND and COS ordinances have been added to our zoning toolbox. A natural resources / forestry division has been created and the Leisure Services department is being refocused on parks, recreation and golf.

**Leading by Example.** You have been foremost a leader by example. Typically you are the first one in and the last to leave. You have taken no sick days. You led our employees in the organization for and actual trip to the New Orleans area, as we offered our services and equipment to that hurricane-damaged area. You pay the highest health insurance premiums of any employee. You personally deliver employee training and lead teams. You have withheld / deferred a wage increase four times to set an example for employees. You are continually positive and undeterred.

As a retiring mayor after 4 years, I would like to add my personal thanks to you for all your hard work for the people of Davenport over the past 5 years. I have enjoyed being mayor and being able to focus on visions and long-range projects rather than working on minutiae. You took good care of the details and the process, about which I never worried (well, seldom), and balanced well the competing interests democracy generates.



Charles W. Brooke, Mayor

## 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

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....



DEE F. BRUEMMER

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

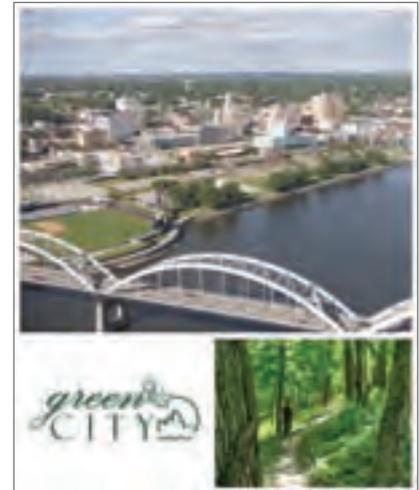
But like many old manufacturing cities, it lost jobs by the thousands and, as globalization hit, suffered double-digit population losses. Some thought it would be another cast-off America city that was once great but no longer.

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.