
NEBRASKA MUNICIPAL CLERKS NEWSLETTER

May 2009



Message from the President

*By Beth Deck, Clerk, Norfolk
NMCA President*

Customer Service!

The Wikipedia explanation for customer service is as follows: Customer service (also known as client service) is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase.

According to Turban et al. (2002)^[1], “**Customer service** is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation.”

Its importance varies by product, industry and customer. As an example, an expert customer might require less pre-purchase service (i.e., advice) than a novice. In many cases, customer service is more important if the purchase

relates to a “service” as opposed to a “product.” The city of Norfolk recently held training sessions on “Out of this World Customer Service” for all employees with speaker Rick Olson of Dallas, Wisconsin. Mr. Olson said the following skills are necessary to “Commit to Developing World Class Service Skills”:

Attitude (always a choice)
Listening Skills (eye contact, ask questions, clarify)
Solving Problems (never blame another person or department)
Diffusing Upset Customers (smile)
Building Teamwork (don’t ask “why,” ask “what” questions)
Navigating Through Change (context reframing)

Olson explained that good customer service must start from within an organization (in our case, municipality). All employees must treat each other with respect and courtesy (good customer service) before we are sincere in providing excellent

service to others (customers). Mr. Olson gave several examples of excellent customer service and asked the following:

Am I *Ritz-Carlton* responsive? — “If you become aware of the problem you own it.”
Am I *Nordstrom* empowered? — “In all situations use your best judgment – hire the smile and train the skills.”
Am I *Fed Ex* reliable? — “When you absolutely, positively need it . . .”
Am I *Disney* magical? — “Everyone is ‘on stage’ at work.”

*Beth Deck, MMC
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*“Your day goes the way the corners of your mouth turn.”
Ginger Snaps – Fun Thoughts on Life by Dian Ritter*





News from Clerk Institute Directors

From the Clerk Institute Directors:

We appreciate all the thoughtful comments and suggestions we receive. As promised, here are responses to some of these. This year we got a lot of feedback about the **shortage of seating**. This year's program design attempted to address a problem resulting from recent changes in the IIMC education guidelines; however, the attempt to address one problem resulted in a different problem. In the past we were able to offer more sessions because many speakers were staff from state departments who generally do not charge a fee. Within the new guidelines these program update sessions are now counted as electives and can be only 20 percent of the entire education program. This means we cannot use as many state speakers and the rest of the program must be filled with speakers who generally do charge a fee. To keep the registration fees low, this year we had fewer speakers and more combined sessions. This did not work. We hope to avoid the seating issues next year. Materials from all 2009 sessions are available at <http://clerkinstitute.unomaha.edu>. Many clerks want the

roundtables back.

Last year we recommended, and the Education Committee approved, eliminating the roundtables based on the self-assessments indicating that clerks learned very little new information. We will revisit this issue.

We consistently get a mixed bag of comments about **social and interpersonal**, a.k.a. touchy-feely, **sessions**. Some participants love them, wish for more of them and suggest Fridays consist entirely of them. Other participants do not like them, do not want them and resent having to participate in them. Within the new guidelines, 30 percent of the CMC program must be devoted to social and interpersonal issues. Put simply, social and interpersonal issues concern people interacting with other people. It is about communicating our wants and needs, our feelings and thoughts; and interpreting other people's in turn. Most would agree that a successful clerk must have these skills. Developing these skills requires being open to discussing and exploring them, including an occasional activity that may feel uncomfortable, intrusive and a



bit out of your comfort zone. In 2008, the MMC program did not have any social and interpersonal sessions. Academy clerks said they wanted more. This year's Academy program had three.

The most common comment is about the relevance of a particular session to the participant's **specific job duties**. This issue can be particularly important for first year Institute clerks as they want to know the basics of their position right away. The Institute program runs on a four-year cycle in which we cannot repeat sessions for IIMC education credit. Each year, we try to include some primary topics, such as public records and records retention, and some secondary topics, such as the clerk's role in enforcing nuisance ordinances and maintaining records for disaster declarations.

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News from Clerk Institute Directors

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We will review whether sessions on management skills and media relations are appropriate for the Institute.

The second most common comment is about the relevance of some topics to municipalities of a **particular class size**. Many village clerks feel the sessions are pitched to larger municipalities. It has been suggested we run separate tracks by municipal class size. This approach would be more expensive because it would require additional speakers. Cost is a major issue for many clerks, and we try to keep the registration fee as low as possible. (The University also subsidizes a good portion of the cost.) In reviewing the sessions

from the 2009 program most did apply to villages, as well as first and second class cities. We will continue to work to develop programs that satisfy IIMC criteria and also meet your needs. Any clerk is welcome at the Institute and Academy. We understand there are clerks who choose not to pursue IIMC certifications for a number of reasons. However, we are charged by NMCA to operate an IIMC Institute, which includes aligning education programs to meet IIMC guidelines. Please continue to provide us with comments and suggestions. It is the best way tool we have to improve the Nebraska Clerk Institute program.

A Nebraska Municipal Clerk Survey was recently mailed to all municipal clerks in Nebraska.

The survey is approved by the NMCA. By completing the survey, you will provide information to improve the training we offer and that your NMCA officers and board members can use to advocate for improvements of other educational and professional development programs. We will communicate the results to IIMC because IIMC needs to hear from those clerks who have chosen not to pursue the CMC or MMC just as much as from those who have.

Next month: "What you learned at the Institute and Academy."

Contact State Archives for records documentation

Contact the State Archives via e-mail so you have documentation on their decision regarding the records. Keep in mind that the role of the State Archives is to determine which records have enduring historical value and whether these records should be kept on a permanent basis. Contact Information: Gayla Koerting, Government Records Archivist
gayla.koerting@nebraska.gov

(402) 471-4783

OR

Andrea Faling, State Archivist
andrea.faling@nebraska.gov
(402) 471-4785

Please provide the following information to assist her in determining if the State Archives wants the records or not.

- 1) Name, job title, contact information (phone #, organization, address) NOTE: If the records are not at the same

location, please provide that information too.

- 2) Record schedule # and specific item # of your records from the schedule
- 3) Brief description of content/function of record
- 4) Record Volume (Number of items/folders/boxes - **please be specific**)
- 5) Record Type/Medium (example: paper, electronic, CD,

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Contact State Archives for records documentation

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microfilm, maps, drawings, etc)

6) Aesthetic condition/material stability of records. Have the materials suffered damage of any kind? (i.e., insect/rodent infestation, water damage)

6) Arrangement (example: alphabetic, numeric, alphanumeric, subject, geographic, chronologic, etc)

7) Span date of records (from/to)

8) Do they contain confidential information – if so what

9) Attach file with scanned images (samples) of the record (NOTE: Do not scan/attach records to an e-mail that contains confidential information)
The State Archivist may need

other information before they can make a decision on the records and, based on the information you supply, contact you directly. But the information above should provide much of the information they need. If the decision is to accession the records into the State Archives collection, they can provide information on the accession process (forms to fill out, etc). **Please note:** Once the records are accessioned into their collections, these materials are in the possession of the State Archives and the records officially belong to that agency. If the State Archives does not want the records and they have met their retention period,

please dispose of them per your organization's policy and procedures (NOTE: Your organization should have policies or procedures for the disposition of confidential records). If I can be of additional assistance, please contact via the information below.

Mary R. Ott, Records Information Management Specialist
Secretary of State - Record Management Division
440 South 8th Street, Suite #210

Phone: (402) 471-4184 Fax: (402) 471-2406

Email

Mary.Ott@SOS.NE.GOV

South Sioux City Clerk says thanks

I just want to thank all of the Nebraska Clerks for the support I have received over the years. At Clerks Academy in March, many of my sister clerks threw me a bridal shower/stagette. Linda and Vanee were the master minds behind it. But it was so nice and I really appreciate the gifts and the company that evening. On April 11, I was married to Steve Lee in Atlantic, Iowa. It was attended by several of my fellow clerks

and city officials, which meant the world to Steve and me. The Nebraska Clerks Association is made up of some of the most amazing ladies, and I'm honored to be a part of this organization. Thanks a million to all of you.

– Submitted by Sue Murray-Lee

Attention all Clerks

Don't forget to share information about events in your community and items of interest for your city or village.

These articles are the most helpful and interesting to each of us. When you submit them to the League, ask that they be put under the "City News" section.

Thanks!

*Submitted by Debra Schaefer,
Seward*



Northeast Nebraska Clerks Association Minutes

The Northeast Nebraska Clerk's Association met on April 16, 2009 at Norfolk City Council Chambers in Norfolk. President Cinda Jones called the meeting to order at 1:24 p.m. Clerks from the following communities were present: two from Madison, Plainview, Elgin, Petersburg, two from Creighton, Norfolk, Hoskins, Randolph, O'Neill, two from Neligh, Verdigre, Hartington, Battle Creek, Butte, Ponca, Genoa, Leigh, Wisner, and Oakdale. Speaker Brittney Koenig a Customer Care Specialist with NPPD.

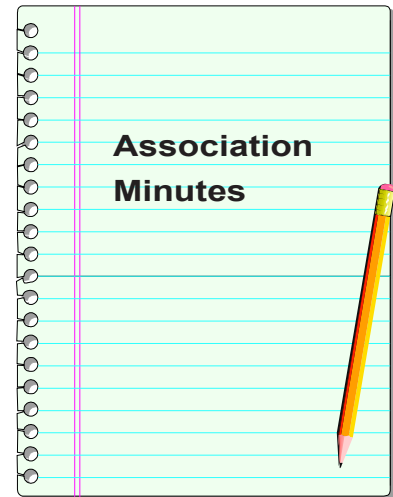
A motion to approve the Jan. 15, 2009 minutes was made by Beth Deck of Norfolk. There was a seconded by Alisha Bartling of Verdigre. Motion Carried.

Lacie Andreasen gave the treasurer report, stating that

there is \$246.64 in the checking account and \$733.91 in the savings account. There was a motion made to approve the treasurer report by Crystal Lenzen of Hartington and seconded by Nikki Johnston of O'Neill. Motion carried. There was a motion to pay Stocky's \$126.00 and also Amy Wegener \$ 113.32 made by Carmen Jacobs of Creighton and seconded by Beth Deck of Norfolk. Motion Carried.

Cinda Jones thanked the association for all the congrats that she got down at clerk school/academy along with the flowers. Cinda also wanted to thank Lacie Andreasen for the wonderful banquet that she put together and for everyone that helped and also thanked Beth Deck for the leadership that she has provided for the Nebraska Association. There was no sunshine committee report.

The July 16, 2009 meeting will be in Norfolk at the City Council Chambers. We will have Stocky's provide the meal again this time and the topic is still being considered. We are thinking of maybe having Ruth from Nebraska Sales and Use Tax come or Shelia with City of Norfolk Human Resources. There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:25 p.m. made



by Michael Fleer of Battle Creek and seconded by Lacie Andreasen of Genoa. Motion approved and carried.

The next meeting will be July 16, 2009 at the Norfolk City Council Chambers.

Brittney Koenig, Customer Care Specialist of NPPD was the speaker.

Submitted by Jennifer Carr – Secretary

**Be sure to attend
the Municipal
Accounting and
Finance Conference
in Kearney,
June 17-19, 2009**

Check legislative web site

Check the Legislature's web site for more information about your state Senators and the Legislature.

The web site address is <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/web/public/home>.



Three Rivers Clerks Association Minutes

The Three Rivers Clerks Association met for their regular meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2009, at JD's Bar & Grill in West Point.

President Patty Knobbe opened the meeting with the following members present: Patty Knobbe, Snyder; Theresa Busse, North Bend; Jennifer Carlson, Bancroft; Lori Kathol, Dodge; Linda Cech, Clarkson; Linda Welsher, Fort Calhoun; Melissa Johnson, Waterloo; Joan Suhr, Valley; Shawn Smith, Valley; Brenda Weitzenkamp, Uehling; June Moline, Mead; Mary Lou Ritter, Lyons; Cynthia Petersen, Oakland; Mary Kempf, West Point; Al Vacanti, Scribner; Mayor Marlene Johnson, West Point; and Linda Douglas, Arlington.

Secretary/Treasurer Theresa Busse reported that \$30 in dues was deposited and the only check written was for our last speaker's lunch, leaving a balance of \$1,737.83 in the checking account.

President Knobbe introduced West Point's Mayor Marlene Johnson. She welcomed everyone to West Point.

President Knobbe asked for committee reports – none given.

Knobbe announced that Mary

Kempf from West Point is the new Secretary/Treasurer for the Nebraska Municipal Clerk Institute and Cynthia Petersen our District 4 Director.

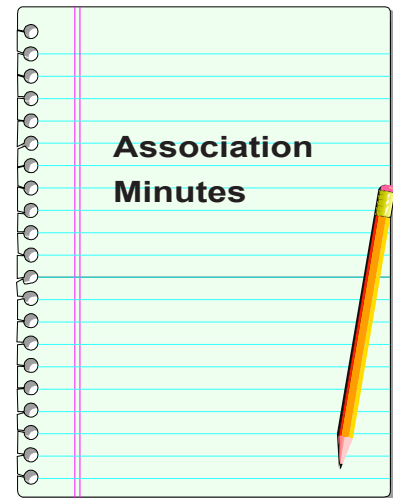
Knobbe asked if those that attended the Nebraska Municipal Clerk Institute/Master Municipal Clerk Academy in North Platte had any comments to share. All comments received were positive, thought the classes were very good this year.

Discussion was held concerning our annual forum. Last year, we had decided to rotate the forum every other year, so suggestions for a date and topic were requested. Linda Douglas moved to set the forum date for Nov. 5, 2009, Joan Suhr seconded it. Motion carried.

Joan Suhr, Shawn Smith and Melissa Johnson offered to serve on the Forum committee. Suggestions included presenting mock council meetings, possibly getting input from Sandy Olson with National Assoc. of Parliamentarians.

No new business.

President Knobbe asked if we'd like to plan a summer social event, to include our spouses. Cynthia Petersen offered to have a potluck barbecue at her home in Tekamah following tours to two



wineries. Details will be further discussed at the next meeting.

President Knobbe asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Jan. 15, 2009 minutes. Shawn Smith made the motion to approve the Jan. 15, 2009 minutes as presented, seconded by Lori Kathol. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jennifer Carlson, seconded by Cynthia Petersen. Motion carried. The next meeting will be held in Fremont July 16, 2009, location not yet determined.

Following lunch we toured West Point's Nielsen Community Center – what a fabulous place!

– Submitted to Theresa Busse
Secretary/Treasurer



How to register for newsletter e-mail list

Here is how you sign up to have your name placed on the newsletter e-mail list. Through this list, you will be notified of when the latest *Nebraska Municipal Clerks Newsletter* is available to view online.

- 1) Go to the League's website at <http://lonm.org>.** Click on the Sections and Committees tab that appears on the right hand side of the main page. On the Sections and Committees page, immediately under the heading "Sections and Committees," there is a paragraph, which begins with the words "Attention Municipal Clerks."
- 2) Click on the underlined phrase "Sign-Up,"** which will link you to a Newsletters Alert Sign-Up Form. Fill out the requested information and create a username and password of your choosing. Click on the box with the words "Sign-Up" in it. Your name and e-mail address is automatically added to the list. When a new newsletter is available, a notice will be sent to you.
- 3) Later, if you want to remove your name and e-mail address** from this list or change your e-mail address, you follow the above directions, but click on the "Sign-In" link. There you can login with your existing information and make the necessary changes.
- 4) To access the list of newsletters,** you can go to the Sections and Committees page and click on the underlined phrase "click here" in the paragraph above the list of NMCA officers. The list of Clerks Newsletters will be at the bottom of the page filed by date and title.

July Birthdays

Mindi Clarke	Julian	July 1	Robin Sullivan	Brainard	July 12
Patty Knobbe	Snyder	July 1	Pamela Richter	Kimball	July 13
Susan Kiesel	Gering	July 1	Barbara Grabhorn	Edgar	July 14
Wendy McKain	Trenton	July 2	Sandra Farmer	Gordon	July 14
Judy Dietz	Amherst	July 3	Jeanine Wasser	Ulysses	July 15
Richard Young	Minden	July 3	Patty Lamberty	Arnold	July 17
Nancy Niemann	Raymond	July 3	Gerri Anthony	Sidney	July 17
Angela Oliver	Clarks	July 3	Janelle Kline	Columbus	July 18
Tom Delmont	Beemer	July 4	Lea Ann Doak	McCook	July 18
Irene Cooper	Bridgeport	July 4	Joyce Beck	Crete	July 20
Crystal Seyditz	Osceola	July 5	Tammy Cooley	Morrill	July 20
Cynthia Sanders	Guide Rock	July 6	Lesia Parker	Hay Springs	July 23
Cathy Lupomech	La Vista	July 7	Becky Kramer	Litchfield	July 24
Irene Dresch	Primrose	July 7	Melissa Vanderford	Benkelman	July 25
Barbara Sydow	Stratton	July 7	Brenda Daniels	Verdon	July 26
Kristine Gall	Alma	July 7	Rosemarie Russell	Gering	July 29
David H. Rish	Central City	July 10	Rebecca Sandman	Utica	July 30
Charlene Jensen	Hubbard	July 10	Korla Keller	Bassett	July 31
Linda Eschenweck	Thayer	July 10			



Municipal Legal Calendar

(All statute citations to Revised Statutes of Nebraska)

JULY 2009

CITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS

- July 1 Chair of the Park and Recreation Commissioners must file with City Clerk an itemized statement of all expenditures of the Park and Recreation Board. (16-697)
- Between July 10
and July 30 Advertise for Class C Liquor License renewals. (53-135.01)
- Between July 15
and August 15 Job titles and salaries of employees shall be published. (19-1102)
- Prior to publication
of notice
of budget hearing Council prepares proposed budget statement and makes it available to the public. (13-504)
- Before August 20 County Assessor certifies to each governing body the current valuation of all property subject to the applicable levy. (13-509)
- Before September 20 Budget Statement filed with County Clerk and State Auditor (13-508)
- Within 10 working days ..
following meeting or
before next meeting
(whichever is sooner) Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection.
- Within 15 days of
passage Clerk publishes ordinances passed. (16-405)
- Within 30 days
following
Council meeting Clerk publishes official proceedings of meetings, including claims. (19-1102)
- At end of month Clerk files monthly report. (16-317)
- Within 20 days after
end of month Treasurer files monthly financial report. (16-318)
- * * Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council meeting. (84-1411)
- End of Each Quarter Report from Depository Banks due. (16-714)

VILLAGES AND CITIES OF THE SECOND CLASS

- Between July 10 and
July 30 Advertise for Class C Liquor License renewals. (53-135.01)
- Between July 15 and
August 15 Job titles and salaries of employees shall be published. (19-1102)
- Prior to publication
of notice
of budget hearing Governing body prepares proposed budget statement and makes it available to the public. (13-504)
- Before August 20 County Assessor certifies to each governing body the current valuation of all property subject to the applicable levy. (13-509)
- Before September 20 Budget statement filed with County Clerk and State Auditor. (13-508)
- Within 10 working days ..
following meeting or
before next meeting
(whichever is sooner) Clerk to have minutes available for public inspection.
- Within 15 days
of Passage Clerk publishes or posts ordinances passed. (17-613)
- Within 30 days
following
Council meeting Clerk publishes official proceedings of meeting including claims. (19-1102)
- Within 20 days after
end of month Treasurer files monthly financial report. (17-606)
- * * Clerk must prepare agenda prior to next Council or Board meeting. (84-1411)