

# Blindsided—Suddenly and Abruptly!

A city manager's code of survival requires arithmetic skills embellished by political commonsense—namely, how to count to three when your city commission has five members and rumors are circulating that your head is on the chopping block. Learning how to count matters but city managers are not always the best mathematicians. One can be blindsided and unceremoniously dumped. Consider the case of the former city manager of Lake Wales, Florida. Tony had been the city manager for eight years and was proud of the achievements he had brought to the community of 12,000. In his words, "I was blindsided. There was no process, no warning, not one commissioner coming to me with a list of concerns and timetables."

Disturbed and perturbed by this brusque treatment, Tony decided to challenge the commission 3-2 majority and faced the unpleasant prospect of publicly being fired. As he put it, "I was warned early in my city management career that you should not wrestle with a pig—you and the pig end up in the mud, and the pig loves it!" But wrestle he did. His \$110,000 salary was on the line along with his reputation. At the public hearing an overflow crowd of 100 people wore green ribbons in support of Tony and many speakers urged the commissioners to give Tony an opportu-

nity to correct any problems. A standing ovation from those attending the meeting erupted when Tony finished his statement by saying "I love Lake Wales, and I want to continue to serve."

Tony lost the match.

Questions

1. Is fairness or lack thereof an ethical issue?
2. Should Tony have challenged the commission majority in the way that he did?
3. Shouldn't Tony have respected the commission as a democratic body that was fully within its rights to fire him?

Based on a real case: See [www.theledger.com/article/20090729/NEWS/907299930](http://www.theledger.com/article/20090729/NEWS/907299930) and <http://www.theledger.com/article/20090724/NEWS/907249890> accessed 27 September 2009

*ASPA member Donald C. Menzel is president of Ethics Management International and a former ASPA president. Email: [donzmenzel@verizon.net](mailto:donzmenzel@verizon.net)*



## Persistence Important in Government Job Hunting

From RESUME, pg. 13

ecutive jobs, recommends "structuring each success story to identify the problem you addressed, your actions, results and any positive feedback you earned."

Limit each KSA answer to one written page. Don't feel obligated to fill the space provided; if you can make a case for yourself clearly and quickly, do so.

*Other documents:* Hiring managers recommend attaching additional documents, such as professional or student publications or a strong reference, to your hard-copy applications when possible (and even if not solicited). Some online systems allow you to reference publications or provide Web links to support your application.

### Don't Give Up

If you're rejected from one or more of your target jobs, remember that persistence is

just as important to federal job searches as private sector hunts. Why? Because each federal job is filled by different hiring managers using different criteria, the person who passes on one of your applications may not see your next one.

What's more, every job search is, to some degree, a numbers game: The more suitable openings you find and target, the better your chances will be of success. Your next application could hit the bull's eye.

*Lily Whiteman is the author of the critically acclaimed *How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job (Amacom)*, the careers columnist of *Federal Times*, and a senior writer at the *United States National Foundation (NSF)*. Her website is *IGotTheJob.net*. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of NSF.*

**ASPA Members:**  
**Access PA TIMES Current Issue and Archive Online!**  
**Log on to ASPA website. Click PA TIMES icon on Menu bar.**  
**You must be logged in to see the link to the current issue or the PA TIMES online community, which hosts the archive.**  
**The Archive contains issues from 2003-2009.**

**Contact: [cjewett@aspanet.org](mailto:cjewett@aspanet.org)**

*Strategies for sustaining economic growth and providing jobs—without raising taxes*

## THE FORMULA FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH ON MAIN STREET AMERICA

Gerald L. Gordon

Fairfax County, Economic Development Authority,  
Vienna, Virginia, USA

*"... a comprehensive, analytic, and clear look at the importance and complexity of economic growth. ... an important read ..."*

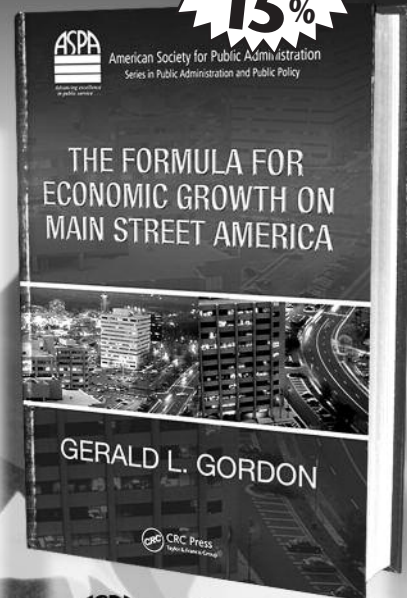
— Dr. Alan Merten, President,  
George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

*"Dr. Gordon's 25 years of experience in Fairfax County have yielded the kinds of valuable insights that can benefit other communities."*

— Steven L. Davis, Chairman,  
Fairfax County Economic Development Authority  
and Former Senior Executive, Exxon Mobil Corporation

**Take the necessary steps to stabilize and enhance the growth of your city**

Based on the author's 25 years of experience as president of one of America's foremost economic development agencies, and his involvement in assisting communities around the world, the book shows how to assess the needs of communities and details what is needed to put plans in place. Drawing on case studies, the book illustrates lessons learned and how they can be applied. Dr. Gerald Gordon provides the framework and strategies to weather most economic storms and chart a course toward sustainable economic development.



ASPA  
 CRC Press  
 Taylor & Francis Group

A volume in the  
 ASPA Public  
 Administration and  
 Public Policy series

Series Edited by Evan Berman  
[evanberman@gmail.com](mailto:evanberman@gmail.com)

Catalog no. AU3894, July 2009, 186 pp., ISBN: 978-1-4200-9389-6, \$59.95 / £38.99

**Order online at [www.crcpress.com](http://www.crcpress.com)**  
**ASPA members enter discount code 392DP and SAVE 15%**

**ASPA Members SAVE 15%**