



**Retirement Celebration Planning:
Looking for Ways to Avoid
Another Rubber Chicken Dinner and Plaque?**
The Institute for Local Government's Legacy Fund Can Help

*By Henry Gardner, Executive Director, Association of Bay Area Governments, and
Sharon Jensen, County Administrator, County of Yolo*

Demographics being what they are, a number of our colleagues are contemplating retirement. While visions of more time for such activities as travel, gardening, fishing and getting more exercise are enticing, there tends to be one final hurdle to overcome before we ride into the sunset: the obligatory retirement/tribute dinner, with the associated presentations of plaques, resin encased badges, proclamations and other items that may be hard for us to find a use for or a place to display.

For some, this rite of passage may contain great meaning and the plaques and other items will have sentimental value. Others may be searching for an alternative.

For those in the latter category, we have an idea for your consideration. If you are aware of an intent to collect for a gift or the your agency plans to do a plaque, consider requesting a contribution to the Institute Local Government's endowment fund in lieu of a gift, plaque or full-scale retirement event. It enables the community and your colleagues to recognize your public service with a contribution in your honor. It also demonstrates your own ongoing commitment to public service and making sure local officials have resources to support them in their service to their communities.

For example, many agencies that organize retirement events pay for them by charging attendees a certain amount, so there is no backlash about using taxpayer monies for this purpose. Typically the cost of any gift for the retiree is built into this per person charge. Let it be known that you appreciate the thought of such a celebration, but you would like any money that would otherwise be spent on items to be presented to you to be instead used to support the cause you feel most strongly about: good government at the local level.

The Institute for Local Government is the nonprofit research affiliate of the League of California Cities and California Association of Counties. The Institute promotes well-informed, ethical, inclusive, effective and responsive local government in California through innovative (state of the art) resources, tools and programs. The purpose of the Institute's Endowment/Legacy Fund is to generate interest earnings to provide ongoing support for the Institute's efforts.

Contributions to the Institute's Legacy Fund are tax deductible. The Institute also accepts bequests, including donations of appreciated stocks, as well as donations from surplus campaign funds. Contributing to the Institute's Legacy Fund is also a way to honor the memory of someone who was committed to public service at the local level if they have not specified a charitable cause to which donations should be made.

Contact JoAnne Speers, the Institute's Executive Director, for more information about supporting the Institute for Local Government's Legacy Fund at 916.658.8208 or mkuehne@ca-ilg.org. You are also invited to visit the "Honoring Public Service" section of the Institute's website for sample event invitation language and other ideas.