



2026 Spring Exchange Agenda



OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

2026 League Spring Exchange

Glacier Canyon Conference Center at Wilderness Resort · WI Dells
May 7–8, 2026

TRACK 1

Secure & Connected: Innovative Approaches to Building Resilient Communities

Forward-thinking strategies for community protection, examining how drones and modern legal frameworks can be used responsibly to enhance the quality of life and security for every Wisconsin resident.

TRACK 2

Dollars & Sense: Making Local Money Work

Breaking down the "alphabet soup" of municipal finance into clear, actionable insights. Creative approaches to maximize local resources, understand the rules of the road, and make smart financial decisions that stand the test of time.

General Session

Track 1 — Secure & Connected

Track 2 — Dollars & Sense

Social / Networking

Roundtable

Thursday, May 7th

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM GENERAL

Breakfast & Registration

9:00 AM – 10:20 AM OPENING GENERAL SESSION

Building the Megaphone: Robust Communication Systems for Every Scenario

Whether you're announcing a budget hearing or a boil water advisory, the strength of your communication depends on the infrastructure you build beforehand. We will dive into the mechanics of developing robust municipal communication practices that survive high-pressure environments. From managing the daily "digital heartbeat" of your community to deploying rapid-response protocols during a disaster, this session provides the blueprints for a communication strategy that is both proactive and resilient.

Mueller Communications

10:30 AM – 11:20 AM TRACK 1

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Creating safe communities is a universal priority. CPTED provides a structured approach — a nationally recognized program that integrates design and environmental assessment to deter crime by shaping the built environment.

Phil Johnson

10:30 AM – 11:20 AM TRACK 2

Municipal Debt Financing 101

Entry-level concepts on municipal debt issuance — why municipalities issue debt, the parties involved, various instruments, and a step-by-step overview of the issuance process. Especially valuable for rural and smaller communities looking to leverage debt for projects that currently seem out of reach.

Charlie Verbos, PTMA

Erik Kass, PTMA

11:30 AM – 12:20 PM TRACK 1

Government Fraud: Prevention, Detection, and the Insurance Reality Check

Fraud risk is a growing concern for municipalities, especially those with small teams and limited segregation of duties. This practical session covers the most common fraud schemes in local government, early warning signs, and highest-impact controls — plus an insurance reality check on coverage gaps and documentation needed for recovery. Attendees leave with a simple fraud-prevention checklist.

Krisztina Dommer, Lauterbach & Amen

Jon Budzien, R&R Insurance

11:30 AM – 12:20 PM TRACK 2

Levy Limit Referendum Planning

After two decades of levy limits, many communities have run out of options to sustain current service levels. Walk through the full process — legal requirements, timing, calculations — to get a question from idea to ballot. Includes real-life case studies of both basic and complex referendums.

Kayla Thorpe, Ehlers

Jon Cameron, Ehlers

12:30 PM – 1:50 PM LUNCH & GENERAL SESSION

The Power of the Story: Turning Local Impact into Legislative Influence

Effective advocacy is about more than experience, knowledge, and statistics, it's about building relationships through telling the stories that bring local impacts to life. This session will provide the tools that municipal leaders need to strengthen their advocacy skills by translating local challenges into narratives that resonate throughout your community and in the State Capitol. By highlighting the people and places behind the policy, attendees will gain the confidence to communicate the value of municipal priorities to the Legislature and other important stakeholders.

Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, The League

Evan Miller, Government Affairs Specialist, The League

2:00 PM – 2:50 PM TRACK 1

Search & Seizure: It's Really Complicated

A tabletop exercise placing audience members in the shoes of a law enforcement officer making split-second decisions — then finding out if those choices align with the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Dan Lowndes, Statewide Services

Remzy Bitar, Municipal Law & Litigation Group

2:00 PM – 2:50 PM TRACK 2

Finance Leadership in the Real World

How municipal finance leaders operate effectively in politically optics-driven environments — practical strategies for translating financial truth, navigating perception, and maintaining professional integrity while working with elected officials.

Nicholas Rhinehart, City of Superior

5:00 PM – 7:30 PM SOCIAL EVENT

Dinner, Networking & Improv Show

Unwind after a full day of sessions over a great meal and informal networking with colleagues, speakers, and partners. Then ring in the Spring with an improvisational comedy show made up on the spot — based entirely on your input. A night that couldn't be repeated even if they tried!

Friday, May 8th

8:00 AM – 9:20 AM BREAKFAST & GENERAL SESSION

The "Lotto" Strategy: Ensuring Continuity When the Unexpected Happens

If your key staff member won the lottery tomorrow, would your municipality stall? This session provides a roadmap for identifying "single points of failure" in your office and implementing knowledge-sharing practices that protect your community from the brain drain of sudden departures.

Kami Lynch, UW Extension Local Government Education

9:30 AM – 10:20 AM TRACK 1

Drones and Emergency Services

How drones are enhancing capabilities for police and fire emergency response services — covering advantages, pitfalls when starting a drone program, and resources available through your insurer and local educational organizations.

Blair Rogacki, MPIC

Rob Hoch, NWTC Drone Training

John Vose, Underwriting Director, MPIC

9:30 AM – 10:20 AM TRACK 2

TIF 101

Kayla Thorpe, Ehlers

Jon Cameron, Ehlers

10:30 AM – 11:20 AM ROUNDTABLE

Member Roundtables — Small, Medium & Large

Back by popular demand — roundtables bringing together municipal stakeholders for discussion, collaboration, and networking across our most critical and important topics.

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM CLOSING SESSION & LUNCH

Ask the Attorneys

You ask, we answer! Bring your pressing legal questions to League Attorneys, or simply listen as they field questions from municipal leaders on the most critical topics facing local government today.