



from the director

NEW WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL KOLES

—Mark D. O'Connell, Executive Director, Wisconsin Counties Association

There was a time when local government groups and advocacy organizations operated within their own universe, working to ensure their interests and concerns were protected with not a whole lot of regard for others.

That time is long ago and today's political climate could not be further from this walk down memory lane. Today, coalition building and groups that on the surface do not have obvious ties are working together and writing some of the biggest success stories in recent years for Wisconsin.

Amidst these changes, local government groups continue to thrive and work collaboratively to face legislative challenges and find common outcomes. These groups include the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Wisconsin Towns Association along with us here at WCA. On a regular basis, our staff gather here in Madison to discuss strategy, updates and solutions.

As members of the local government family, we know it is the people that are the reason behind our success and as in everything with life, changes come and organizations continue to push forward.

In that vein, we are proud to wish retiring Wisconsin Towns Association Executive Director Rick Stadleman the best in his retirement. He has been the head of the Towns since April of 1987 and is a well-known and well-respected fixture at the Capitol. We have had the pleasure of working with him and are grateful to him for all he has done during his tenure.

On August 31, 2014, Michael Koles took over the reins of the Towns Association and he comes from a strong local government background. Most recently he was the Department Head of UW-Extension in Waupaca County and has served as a Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development (CNRED) Educator for Waupaca County since 2003. He has been a UW-Extension CNRED agent since 1998 and before coming to Waupaca County



*Michael Koles, Executive Director,
Wisconsin Towns Association*

was in Winnebago County in that role.

We are excited to work with Michael and believe his background in leadership and education will serve him well in his new position. Our UW-Extension agents work in unison with our counties and believe he was a strong choice for the future of the Wisconsin Towns Association.

While there will always be changes in personnel, what remains is our dedication to advancing the agenda of local governments and making our communities and state the strongest place possible to live. We welcome Michael and look forward to working with him as a new legislative session kicks off in January. ❏