

Minnesota Association of



Government COMMUNICATORS

MAGC invites you to join us for a half-day professional development conference.

“Mike Blanton: From Deputy Commissioner and Chief Spokesperson to Federal Inmate 23521-056”

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Metropolitan Clubroom

5418 Wayzata Blvd, Golden Valley, MN 55416

How easy is it for a public employee to become entangled in a political nightmare from which there is no escape? Mike Blanton spent much of his 22-year professional communications career in public service before spending a year in federal prison because of trust and loyalty to a fault. In this gripping presentation, he details the high price he paid for doing his job, and he shares the lessons he learned so others can avoid the same mistakes. His incredible story will help public employees recognize when serious trouble is on the horizon and how to handle it.

Blanton’s Story . . .

In June 2003, Mike Blanton resigned as deputy commissioner and chief spokesperson of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture after federal charges were filed against him for his role in helping his boss, the commissioner of agriculture, cover-up problems associated with campaign finances.

Several months later, Blanton entered into a plea agreement with prosecutors and agreed to plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to obstruct justice during the investigation of the commissioner’s campaign finances.

On March 3, 2004, Blanton was sentenced to one year and one day in federal prison for his role in this scandal. He was immediately taken into custody by U.S. Marshals and was eventually transported to a minimum security prison camp in Lee County, Va. He served 10 months before being released and returning home to Raleigh, N.C.

. . . Hits Close To Home

This workshop offers more than just a cautionary tale for the seasoned communications professional. After hearing Blanton speak, you may look more carefully at the issues you are asked to communicate and question the underlying motives.

- *As a public employee, have you ever been put into an ethically questionable position?*
- *Does politics affect your job?*

- *Are you loyal to your boss? If so, how loyal?*
- *How much do you trust those in leadership positions above you?*
- *Do you think a scenario like this could never happen to you?*
- *What's prison really like for someone who has never been in trouble before?*

Who Should Attend?

- Communications professionals
- Public information officers
- Mid- and upper-level local, county, state employees
- Elected officials

What Others Say About Mike's Presentation

"I heard Michael speak at the 3CMA Annual Conference in Atlanta last year after he had just finished serving his prison term. It was one of the most memorable presentations I've ever seen. Michael's story is stunning because he illustrates the worst that can happen when politics and ethics collide. The lesson I learned was that as communications professionals, we should always speak for the organization, not for any one person. You'll find out why when you hear Michael speak." (Diann Kirby, Communications Administrator, City of Bloomington, 8-4-06)

“. . . the comments that I've seen have all been basically a standing ovation in regards to your presentations. I have seen more than one evaluation form come in from seasoned professionals saying that your presentation was the best that they've ever seen or heard at ANY conference that they've ever attended." (Scott Lehtonen, Director of Information, 3CMA [City and County Communications and Marketing Association], 9-6-05)

"Many of us can easily see ourselves making the same choices you made. . . . Feedback from the attendees was more than positive; in fact you were listed as the best presentation on conference evaluations." (Jenell Atlas, President, Florida Law Enforcement Public Information Officers Association, 6-19-06)

"Thank you Mike. You received "excellents" in all our conference evaluations." (John Allore, President, North Carolina Government Investment Association, 7-24-06)

Workshop Agenda

11 a.m.	Registration
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Buffet lunch catered by D'Amico Catering
12:45 – 3:45 p.m.	Program and discussion
4 p.m.	Adjourn

Cost

Early Bird Registration – register by Friday, August 18, 2006:

\$40 for MAGC members; \$60 for non-members.

After August 18, 2006: \$45 for MAGC members; \$65 for non-members.

How to Register

To register, email Sara Swenson (sswenson@dakotacda.state.mn.us) or call her at (651) 675-4434 and provide the following information:

Name(s): _____

Agency: _____

of MAGC Members attending: _____

of Non-Members attending: _____

Payment Method (pay at the door or PO#): _____

Cancellations for the workshop after August 30, 2006, and no shows will be billed.

MAGC State Vendor #060958006-00