



Regionalism

Overcoming the Barriers to Cooperation Among Localities

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What We'll Do This Morning

- Talk generally about regionalism
 - What's happening around the country
- Tell you what you said in a survey about cooperation
- Give you a case study: Fictional county
 - Three big obstacles to cooperation
 - You'll work on overcoming obstacles
- Talk about strategies: Post on the wall
 - On way out, you'll dot vote on the best ideas

Follow Up

- A report, this presentation and other resources will be posted on the ISAC web site and the Civic Strategies web site.
 - www.iowacounties.org Look for “hot topic area”
 - www.civic-strategies.com/onlib/regionalism.html

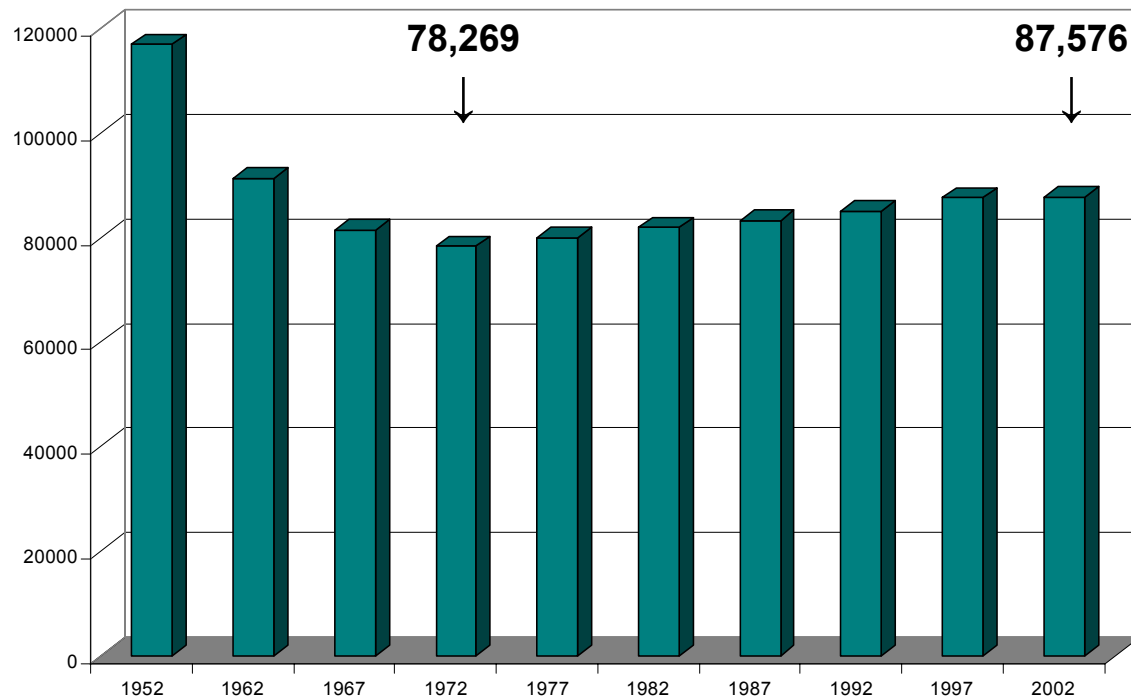


The State of Regionalism

- Two trends:
 - We're creating more local governments.
 - We seem to be creating more regional or intergovernmental collaborations.
- Seem contradictory but may not be.

Decline and Rise of Local Government

Number of Local Government Units, 1952-2002



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Decline and Rise of Local Government

- Big decline: School districts
 - 67,400 in 1952 to 13,500 in 2002
 - - 80%
- Big increase: Special districts
 - 12,300 to 35,100
 - +184%
- But municipalities also increased
 - 16,800 to 19,400
 - +16%



In Iowa, You Know This

- Survey of county supervisors a few years ago
 - Opposed to dissolving local governments/merging them
 - Disincorporating cities under 500 population
 - Believed their constituents would be even more strongly opposed
 - But supportive of intergovernmental agreements to share services



Intergovernmental Cooperation

- We believe regional collaboratives and service sharing is growing
 - 2003 survey showed 45% of governments surveyed in U.S. had considered sharing services with another locality the previous year.
 - About half of these actually followed through.



We Want Our Cake and Eat It Too

- We want responsive government – and lots of it
 - Hence, localities are still being created
 - Shrinking cities and towns don't often go away
- We want thrifty government and lots of cooperation
 - Address the major regional problems
 - Enhance services, keep taxes low



Factors That Hinder Cooperation

1. Leaders fear losing control
2. Leaders fear being taken advantage of
 - “We’ll pay more than we’ll get”
3. There’s important opposition from the outset
 - Somebody powerful just doesn’t like it
4. There’s historic rivalry/dislike among the communities

October 2006 Survey of ISAC members for this workshop

Overcoming Common Obstacles

- Fictional case study or scenario of a collaboration
- Present three common obstacles
- Divided into A, B and C Groups
 - Groups will work on different obstacles
- Objective: As a group, draft three strategies to overcome the obstacle
 - Use flipcharts to write them down
 - Choose a spokesperson

Case Study: White County, Minn.

Commission Chair Bob Smith needs your collective advice

- Opportunity for combining Sheriff's Dept. with Otisville's police dept.
 - City can't afford department anymore
 - Chief is retiring
- He can demonstrate the logic
- Merging the departments would allow better services at somewhat lower cost
- But he's expecting significant obstacles

Likely Obstacles

- A. Otisville City Council will almost certainly fear the loss of control over its police dept
 - Groups A: How do I deal with fear of losing control?
- B. Otisville citizens believe city was taken advantage of in past cooperative efforts
 - Groups B: How do I deal with fear of being taken advantage of?
- C. An important leader, the newspaper publisher, will almost certainly oppose it
 - Groups C: How do I deal with the opposition of important people?