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Midwestern Legislative Conference

The Council of State Governments

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MLA Gordon Wyant completes regional leadership institute

(Lombard, Ill.) August 16, 2011 -- Gordon Wyant of Saskatoon was among 37 select lawmakers to complete a leadership training program that identifies and assists emerging state and provincial leaders in the Midwest.

MLA Wyant met with fellow lawmakers from Saskatchewan, 11 Midwestern states and two other Canadian provinces on August 12-16, in Madison, Wis., for The Council of State Governments' 17th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD).

"The Bowhay Institute is one of the premier leadership training programs in the nation," says Illinois Rep. Elaine Nekritz, who serves as co-chair of the institute's steering committee. "The legislatures in the region have benefited greatly from the skills their members have gained through this unique educational experience. Many of the graduates now hold leadership positions in their states."

Legislators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan were chosen to participate through a competitive, nonpartisan selection process.

BILLD was founded in 1995 to help new legislators meet the demands of federal devolution and, in many states, term limits. These two emerging forces have highlighted the shortage of training available for legislators, a void that BILLD aims to fill.

A program of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office, BILLD is held in partnership with the University of Wisconsin's Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs. Courses and seminars are conducted by La Follette faculty, Midwestern legislative leaders and professional development experts. In addition to courses designed to develop leadership skills, the program analyzes a variety of public policy issues, including corrections and the regional economy.

The program is funded through grants from foundation and corporate sponsors and an in-kind contribution provided by The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office.

The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development is named in honor of the late James Bowhay, longtime director of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office. Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments has national headquarters in Lexington, Ky., and regional offices in Atlanta, Chicago (Lombard, Ill.), New York City and Sacramento, Calif. The goal of the national, nonpartisan organization is to assist and advance state government.

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