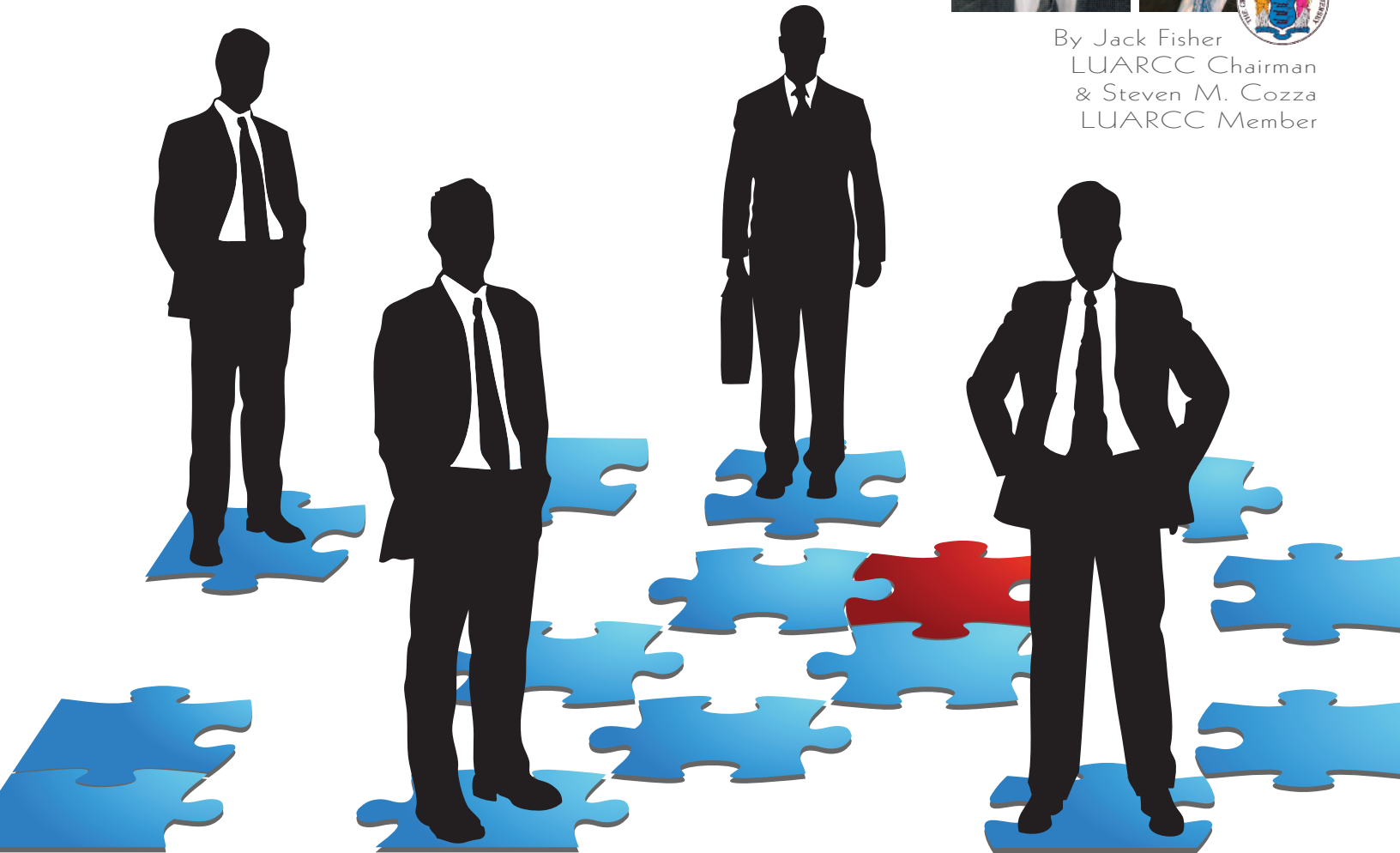


Reorganization and Consolidation

LUARCC Gets to Work



By Jack Fisher
LUARCC Chairman
& Steven M. Cozza
LUARCC Member



Among the many responsibilities assigned to LUARCC was the study of the appropriate allocation of service delivery from the standpoint of efficiency.

In June 2006, an unprecedented special legislative session convened with the goal of enacting property tax reform. Following Governor Corzine's address to a joint session of the Legislature the following month, four bicameral, bipartisan joint committees were formed, one of which was the Joint Committee on Government Consolidation and Shared Services. Among the recommendations of that committee was the creation of a permanent commission to facilitate municipal mergers and the sharing of services among local units.

The law creating this commission, the "Local Unit Alignment Reorganization and Consolidation Commission" (LUARCC), was enacted on March 15, 2007 to study and report on the structure and functions of county and municipal government. Among the many responsibilities assigned to LUARCC was the study of the appropriate allocation of service delivery from the standpoint of efficiency.

In performing its work, the Commission has been hearing from local and county government elected and appointed officials, professional employees, interested citizens, and organizations representing parties interested in the work of the Commission.

Agent for Change At LUARCC's inaugural meeting, Governor Corzine reiterated the Commission's charge... "to find a more optimal mix of governance that will reduce administrative cost, that will look for economies of scale, and ultimately lower the cost of providing services...."

During an initial period of research and investigation, the Commission will develop criteria that will form the basis for recommendations to enhance the efficiency of local government service delivery. These recommendations may range from the sharing of specific services to the realignment of local government units, including possible municipal mergers. A principal goal of this endeavor is to achieve greater economies of scale in municipal operation and thereby, property tax savings.

"We have the ability to address the problem of our overabundance of local government without sacrificing the individual community identities that make New Jersey such a special place to live," said Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts, Jr. "Choosing to continue ignoring these problems will eventually leave us with hundreds of municipalities that are as charmingly colloquial as they are wholly unaffordable."

"I fundamentally believe that what matters most to the people of the state is the way services are delivered," said Roberts.

Who We Are The Commission consists of nine voting members, including the Commissioner of Community Affairs, State Treasurer and seven public members. Of the public members, one is appointed by each of the house leaders and three members are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Of the three gubernatorial appointees, one must reside in a northern, one in a central, and one a southern county. An appointee may be an elected official of a local unit or county only if that person has significant experience in shared services initiatives and demonstrated success at having implemented such agreements at the local level.

Members serve for five-year terms and are eligible for re-appointment. There is currently one vacancy on LUARCC.

The Commission Members are: Chairman Jack Fisher, Managing Director of Tri-State Strategies New Jersey, LLC; Robert F. Casey, Executive Director of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association; Gary Passanante, Mayor of Somerdale and League Executive Board Member; Marvin Reed, former Mayor of Princeton Borough; Jane Kenny, former Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs; Steven M. Cozza, Director of Records

Management and Archives, Somerset County; Joseph V. Doria, Jr., Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs; and David Rousseau, State Treasurer. Hannah Shostack serves as the Commission's Executive Director. For more information on the members, visit www.njslom.org/interlocaladvisorycenter.html.

How To Be Involved The Commission welcomes public input. Its monthly meetings are open to the public and minutes are posted online on the Commission's website at www.state.nj.us/dca/luarcc.

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The Commission plans to post documents related to its work on this website.

To contact the Commission: email luarcc@dca.state.nj.us; or write or call LUARCC: 101 South Broad Street, PO Box 800, Trenton, NJ 08625-0800, (609) 292-9111. ▲

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