

September 2015

Birthstone: Sapphire
Flower: Aster or Morning Glory

Pathfinder



CITY OF SANTA MARIA EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



Word has it ...

From your City Manager

Rick Haydon



Those of you that have worked for the City for a while have heard me say this before, but it bears repeating. Upon discovering that we work for the City, a person's next question is usually, "So, what do you do?"

The simple, direct answer for all of us who work for the City should be the same: "I'm in the customer service business." For as public servants, we all provide customer service; whether it's answering incoming phone lines, responding to an accident, working on a water main or processing a budget transfer – one way or another we all are providing customer service either to internal or external customers.

Every time we interact with an individual, answer the phone, send an email, write a letter, give someone directions, review a document, provide emergency service, maintain a facility, process a payment, provide a program, answer a question or attend a meeting, we are making an impression on our customers.

I came from a customer service background having worked in the transit industry for two different public agencies, Fresno Transit and Monterey-Salinas Transit. In the transit industry, you lived by customer service because if you didn't have customers, you didn't make revenue – so there was a high premium placed on customer service.

That experience forged in me a desire to make customer service not only a high priority in the way I conduct myself, but also to ensure that all public servants (at least those to whom I work with and come in contact with) should value as well.

In the private sector, there's a saying (that I believe started with Nordstrom's department store) that states "the customer is always right." Well, as public servants, I think we can all agree that the customer is not always right; however, my philosophy is more akin to "the customer might not always be right, but there is a right way to treat the customer!" And that right way is with respect, appropriate assistance, honesty, and competency.

As the City's Mission Statement states "To provide the highest quality service in the most efficient, cost-effective, and courteous manner possible" – and this can be done with exceptional customer service!!

I have asked our Human Resources staff to make customer service a high priority this year and they will be going around to various departments providing customer service training. In that regard, they have submitted some handy customer service tips in this edition of the Pathfinder that you might find helpful.

As part of my commitment to customer service, below is a photo of our recent "Lunch is On Us" appreciation BBQ for City Hall staff, hosted by the City Manager's Office.



Rick