

March 2017

Birthstone: Aquamarine
Flower: Daffodil

Pathfinder



CITY OF SANTA MARIA EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



A few words from your City Manager

Rick Haydon



Word has it that we're doing a lot of things right. That's true. This month I want to share some promising initiatives in the name of improving customer service.

Our new "Behind the Scenes" tours are an opportunity for City employees to see and learn about City facilities they may never otherwise get a chance to visit. This gives them a better understanding of the City's functions, to become more well-rounded employees. Staff at hosting departments also get to impart scientific and technical knowledge, and show pride in their roles. The Police Department hosted three of these tours in January. The Utilities Department (Landfill) will host in May, then in August (WasteWater Treatment Plant), and the Fire Department will host in November. The Public Library will be scheduled at a later date.

Also, to help customer service, we are coordinating ride-alongs for Utility Billing employees (who work at City Hall) with Utilities Department refuse truck drivers, so that they better understand how field employees interact with customers. Also, some of the Finance Department staff at City Hall will ride-along with Utilities' water meter staff and see what they deal with and how that relates to Utility Billing's tasks.

For employees with work shifts that start very early in the day, and for those who no longer work in the downtown core due to relocations, the City has made adjustments for meetings with representatives for appointments about deferred compensation. Instead of only hosting such meetings at City Hall, we now also

are holding such meetings at the Police Department, Recreation and Parks, and at Utilities.

I have also received positive feedback that staff was proactive for winter rainstorms. Staff from several departments met before the winter to discuss readiness. Last year, Public Works purchased a "Muscle Wall" - tough plastic barrier sections that can be connected and filled with water to form a temporary dam, to guide water flows. This wall was twice (so far) erected to protect the Hancock Park neighborhood from runoff from nearby farm fields, and the residents were very grateful to our pre-planning of this creative mitigation effort.

Now we're moving toward converting our City Council elections from the current at-large voting system to a district-based process. We will host five public hearings to explain the process to the public, hear from the public, and determine how to draw district maps, in accordance with the law. Like our deferred compensation meetings, these public hearings will be taken on the road and held in various quadrants of the city. We have hired a demographer along with an elections attorney who specializes in district-based elections. This is yet another example of how the City is being responsive and transparent to serve its customers.

Rick