Pathfinder

Word has it ...
From your City Manager

Rick Haydon

(This is the first of a two-part article) **Some of you may have noticed that my picture changed this month; I did this as an illustration of change as change is in the air. Change is inevitable and some of you might not like change because it requires a lot of patience and adjustments. And some of you might not know this, but change is already upon us, and I am asking for your patience as our Information Technology (IT) staff begins to embark upon some significant labor-intensive projects.**

As we all know, our IT staffing is very lean and already spread thin. Staff is constantly juggling many projects while at the same time responding to your everyday IT needs. However, over the next six months to a year, our IT staff will be juggling a number of very high profile and mission-critical projects. At this point you might be asking, "and what does this mean to me?" Well, it means that we all will need to be more patient and understanding when we don't get an immediate response from our IT staff when we need some IT-related assistance.

Starting now, our IT staff will be shifting their service delivery from being highly responsive to all service requests, to that of triaging service requests and trying to fit-in those service requests between project work. Mission-critical requests will still be dealt with on a priority basis, all others will be put in the queue. Consequently, low priority (non mission–critical requests) will have to wait until staff can address them. So, for example, if you want a printer replaced, that will likely not be addressed immediately. Departments need to be prepared to put off projects that are not mission-critical.

A new City website is scheduled to launch around the end of October/early November. The City Manager's Office and IT staff are working with the new vendor to design and test the website. How does this affect you? In addition to IT staff involvement, each Department will be asked to designate a couple of employees who will be responsible for receiving website training in October.

By early November, a new audio-visual and cablecast system will be installed at the Public Library and at City Hall. This will replace an antiquated cablecast system that is on life support. How does this affect you? This project is consuming IT staff time and resources to purchase equipment and to shepherd the work in the Council Chambers, City Hall Tower, and in the Public Library. Upon completion, the City will be able to reliably cablecast meetings of the City Council and Planning Commission, record meetings of the Recreation and Parks Commission for later web-streaming, and also cablecast meetings or events in the Library.

By January, City computers will be receiving an upgrade to Windows 7 and Microsoft 2013. On the heels of that project, a Citywide telephone system upgrade will be in top gear. What does this mean to you? IT staff is preparing for new software and for training sessions that will last for months in order to reach all Departments. In addition, all telephone systems will be converting from the existing three-digit extensions to four-digit extensions. What does this mean to you? It means new letterhead, new business cards, etc.

My intent with this article and next month's article is to convey the reasons why IT staff may not be in a position to continue providing its customary high-level responsiveness. So, like I mentioned, change is in the air; however, I am confident that the wide-reaching changes being brought to us by our IT staff will be a benefit to all of us and our customers.

Rick