

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

PAVING THE WAY FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE BY EDUCATING, ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING OUR EMPLOYEES.

2012 October / November
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CITY OF LINCOLN WELLNESS PROGRAM

During the past several months, the City Wellness Program has been expanding to build on previous wellness efforts. Under the leadership of Keerun Kamble, City Wellness Coordinator, the goal has been to incorporate active and engaging wellness activities and to provide information that improves and supports the overall health of City employees.

The City Wellness Committee has been formed to assist in plan development and program promotion. The committee is comprised of representatives from each department, including Scott Opfer and Gerardo Martinez from Public Works and Utilities.

This past summer, more than 100 PWU employees participated in a Health Risk Appraisal survey. The survey results for PWU identified three health priorities for the coming year: nutrition/weight management, physical activity and alcohol use.

In addition, the top five health interests for PWU are financial/retirement planning; weight management; cooking tips and recipes; healthy eating; and men's health tips.

Great changes are coming! For information on Wellness initiatives, see the article on page four.

Director's Corner

We endure ...

I look back on my first year as Public Works and Utilities Director with an overwhelming sense of pride. Pride in the individual commitment and dedication of our staff toward a common purpose – helping people.

While that sounds simple, it isn't. It takes endurance, perseverance, resiliency and resolve which we demonstrate daily in the execution of our mission.

We endure ...

We successfully pulled the community through a historic drought and water shortage, a major downtown street rehabilitation, the first municipal biennial budget and the last leg of The Antelope Valley Project. Our tireless water crews work to fix the excessive amount of water main breaks created by drought. Our innovative Wastewater staff found ways to reclaim grey water resources (like community pools and effluent) for jet flushing and watering street trees. Our Engineering Services staff exhaust themselves this construction season as downtown and other areas of the City were getting a facelift.

We endure...

With one year to go on the Pinnacle Bank Arena project, a major renovation and move to the Municipal Service Center on the horizon, an expansion of public transit to University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the pursuit of a 2040 vision for solid waste management, these are historically significant times for our Department and our City.

We all have a hand in that. As a Department, we serve a greater and higher purpose for the betterment of our citizens and community.

But the true test of our character is shown not in what we do, but how we do it.

We endure...

After a year of having the privilege to serve as your Director, that is what I'm most proud of. That is what I thank you for.

"Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

– Vince Lombardi



Miki Esposito
Director of Public Works and Utilities



STRONG LINGS

"THERE IS NO 'DIVISION' AMONG OUR DIVISIONS."

Miki Esposito

PWU Director Miki Esposito is pleased to announce the August/September Strong Linc Award recipients for the workplace principle of **sense of humor**. Please congratulate these Strong Lings for their valued service.

Bruce Briney and Charles "Buff" Baker (Engineering Services)

These gentlemen have a sense of humor that is appreciated and noted by many employees in the Developmental Services Center (DSC). They both take their job duties and responsibilities seriously, but have an outlook on life that allows them to serve their customers yet lighten the daily stresses and keep the office atmosphere enjoyable.

Kelly Sieckmeyer, Mark Miller, & Kirk Drake (Engineering Services)

This comedic trio can always be counted on to liven up any day or situation (good or bad). They have the ability to bring smiles to everyone in the area with their light-hearted sarcasm and witty responses. Occasionally, you might even see a dancing shuffle or hear a snippet of a song, all the while addressing the needs of the Department. If you need a "pick me up," you can always count on them.

Rock Krzycki, Ellen Wright, Terry Ullsperger, Tan Pham, Jared Nelson, Ed Kouma, Gary Lacy, Emma Trehwitt (Watershed)

These co-workers maintain a great sense of humor and work well with each other. When there are strong differences of opinions, other opinions are respected. Humor is used many times to help defuse situations.

Bus Operators Toni Kent and Gil Boza (StarTran)

Toni always has a positive attitude and a smile, no matter what the situation. She is quick to initiate and return friendly jibes to lighten the mood and is just fun to be around. As the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Driver Steward, Toni represents drivers in pre-disciplinary meetings and is always able to present the driver's positive attributes while acknowledging the serious nature of the situation. Gil is a very friendly, positive person to everyone who comes in contact with

him. He attracts friendly razzing and responds in kind. Gil tries to provide high levels of service to his bus passengers and is proud to be a friend to all.

Steve Crisler (Wastewater)

Over the past ten years, Steve has consistently provided light-hearted moments in the Division. He has been able to take tense moments and relieve the tension by cracking a joke. Steve can take an ordinary, everyday event and turn it into a hilarious story. His optimistic outlook and jovial attitude while working on serious projects and situations helps those involved keep the right perspective. Being around Steve makes the day fun and enjoyable.

The next workplace principle will focus on **being responsible**. Nominations are due to Miki no later than November 9.

A Farewell Note...

Best wishes to our Public Works and Utilities colleagues who have recently left City employment. Their service to our community is appreciated. May they find success in all their future endeavors!

Steve Masters

(Special Projects) – 33 years

Gary Brandt (Wastewater and Solid Waste) – 26 years

William Ebers (Wastewater and Solid Waste) – 22 years

Jay Hendrickson (Wastewater) – 25 years

Kathie Neemann (Engineering) – 19 years

Alicea McCluskey (Engineering) – nine years

Michael Ham (Engineering/Street and Traffic Operations) – 24 years

John Galaviz (Engineering/Street and Traffic Operations) – seven years

Joaquin Rivera (StarTran) – eight years

September Mayor's Award of Excellence



Mayor Beutler, left, and the Mayor's Award of Excellence recipient Josh Meyer.

\$25,000 worth of free public service advertising on KLKN-TV 8.

Josh's efforts in doing "what they said couldn't be done" has provided a valuable service by helping Lincoln citizens efficiently plan travel routes within the City. The television ads promote City services and help make citizens more aware of the services Public Works and Utilities provides.

Josh Meyer, Associate Engineer, was presented the Mayor's Award of Excellence at the October 15 City Council meeting.

Faced with numerous issues, Josh has been instrumental in launching the use of City traffic cameras for live traffic newscast feeds. In exchange, the City receives over

Congratulations, Josh!



Friday through Tuesday
OCTOBER 26 - 30

StarTran shuttle for
 Boo At The Zoo
 Lincoln Children's Zoo
 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Saturdays
OCTOBER 27
NOVEMBER 10 and 17
 Big Red Express
 Husker Football Shuttle

UPCOMING
CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS

Watch for a public open house in mid-November showcasing the different design alternatives for the [14th Street/Warlick/Old Cheney project](#).

ARTICLES ON THE WEB:

Healthy Living
in Tough Economic Times

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/epublic/live/g2041/build/g2041.pdf>

Make Every Drop Count
in the Home

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/neblines/2012/oct12/NebOct12p01.pdf>



The Drought of 2012

According to the University of Nebraska's Drought Mitigation Center, nearly 55 percent of the nation has been affected by moderate drought, and 35 percent is in a severe drought. This summer was the third warmest in Lincoln, with 70 days of 90-degree temperatures or higher. July is on record as being the hottest in 118 years.

Unfortunately, the Platte River also experienced troubling near-record low flows. This is critical to Lincoln since the well fields that supply Lincoln's drinking water are located in the Platte River valley aquifer. The flows in the Platte River recharge the aquifer that supplies the City's water.

In early August, after nearly six weeks of declining river flows, groundwater levels fell below 60 percent of springtime levels. At that stage, Lincoln's [Water Management Plan](#) calls for mandatory restrictions.

Think of the aquifer as a large bathtub. Now imagine a tub full of sand and gravel, with water filling the voids. Now insert a few small tubes (wells) where water could be withdrawn from the saturated sand and gravel. The level of the water in the tub (aquifer) declines as water is used over time.

As water levels continue to decline in severe drought conditions, some wells will eventually start pumping air (when all of the water is gone). Once the wells are at this stage of pumping, more drastic restrictions have to occur. These restrictions would include minimal outdoor use and cut backs by industries that rely on water for their livelihood.

"We want to thank the community for responding to reductions in use when asked during voluntary and mandatory restrictions," said PWU Director Miki Esposito. ***"We have some changes in mind that will help make subsequent water restrictions easier to understand and easier to manage. I am also pleased with the efforts of City staff in particular, Business Office, Lincoln Water System and Lincoln Police Department personnel in dealing with customers who didn't understand or want to comply with the restrictions."***



Platte River photos courtesy of Larry Geiger - August 2012

Prepping for Snow

Before long, winter will be here. Public Works and Utilities crews are already gearing up for the wintertime work. Snow storms in Lincoln mean round-the-clock dedication of employees and contractors in an effort to keep the streets cleared and safe.

A multi-faceted City snow removal plan is needed to maintain over 2,600 lane miles of roadway. The City uses 127 pieces of equipment and 134 City and contracted personnel to cover the entire city.

Salt brine is sometimes used prior to a snow event to assist crews in clearing the roadways. Not every snowfall requires a full deployment of equipment and personnel. Residential streets are only plowed if the City receives four inches of snow or more. Property owners are required to clear sidewalks and ramps of snow and ice by 9 a.m. the following day.

Community cooperation is essential to having a successful snow removal program.

There are several ways to stay informed on the status of snow operations:

- ❄ Local news media sources
- ❄ The City Snow Removal Plan online
<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/engine/traffic/snow/>
- ❄ RSS feed/email alerts
- ❄ Twitter – sign up at twitter.com/lincolnsnow.
You do not need a Twitter account to receive SMS alerts. Text "follow lincolnsnow" to 40404 (standard text messaging rates apply).
- ❄ Time Warner Cable government access channels 5 and 10

Contact the Snow Center at 402-441-7644 for more information.

Star TRAN SERVES 2,000,000 RIDERS

For the first time since 1990, StarTran served over two million riders in fiscal year 2011-12.

As an expression of StarTran's appreciation to all patrons, 20-Ride passes were discounted 75 percent from September 10 through 14. Over 400 patrons bought 2,281 discounted passes. It was great to share the two million celebration with so many StarTran riders!

With two major new programs in the works – significant savings for 31-consecutive day passes and the expansion of services by assuming the UNL Transit Services in January – StarTran looks forward to continuing ridership increases and more celebrations!

Wellness Initiatives

As a result of PWU's aggregate report from the City Wellness Health Risk Appraisals, several new programs and activities have been initiated in the Department.

Scott Opfer has initiated a pre-shift stretching program in Street Operations based on the need for increased safety and long-term injury prevention. The program started with a pilot group of about 20 employees who work at the Baldwin Shop that serves northeast Lincoln. The program has now expanded to all three shops, with about half of the 100 employees participating.

Gerardo Martinez is in the process of implementing a similar stretching program in the Water and Wastewater Divisions. Indoor and outdoor walking routes at the work sites also have been created and mapped by Water GIS personnel, including the distance of each route.

At the Municipal Service Center (MSC), 901 West Bond, three nutrition presentations were given by UNL Dietetic Master's program interns during the months of June and July. Employees were provided nutritional information and tips on menu make-over, healthy meal planning, and fruit and vegetable recipes and benefits.

A five-month series of cooking demonstrations has started in the MSC to learn food preparation techniques and heart-healthy recipes. These sessions, conducted during the lunch period, help employees gain hands-on experience by assisting in food preparation. The food is graciously provided by employee donation.

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

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