Connection



September 2004



Q. As an instructor and trainer, I work with our local county government and I am wondering what steps are being taken in your county to ensure appropriate succession planning? Are there any best practices?

A. We'd be happy to share some of the initiatives that we've undertaken in the County of Orange. One of the problems I identified when I arrived here more than 18 months ago was a lack of depth in management preparedness. As the County entered an era in which a number of long-time department heads would be retiring, steps needed to be taken to develop the next level of management.

First, I asked all County departments and agencies to develop written succession plans in which they identified strong

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12 Miles of Boxes...100 Million Sheets of Paper

The cavernous warehouse could hold a 747 airliner – if it squeezed in a tad. It's the County's combination of a Smithsonian Museum and Library of Congress. It stores 100 million sheets of paper which, if placed end to end, would circle the earth, yet a single document can be located in less than 15 minutes.

Records Manager Analyst Len Nissenson and a crew of three operate the County's Records Center which stores volumes of documents, some dating back to 1915, from County agencies and departments. In a typical year, the center receives approximately 6,000 boxes of records, destroys nearly 6,000 boxes and gets more than 7,000 requests for individual files. The Records Center is the best alternative to a duplication of departmental efforts in archiving documents that must be retained for specific periods of time.

The facility holds 50,000 boxes of documents amounting to 1,000 tons of paper. Laid end to end, the boxes would stretch for 12 miles. The Center not only stores materials, but also facilitates the retrieval of stored documents that are once again needed. Despite the maze-like corridors and stacks, records can be quickly retrieved and provided to requesting departments.

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Mountains of documents fill the Records Center.

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middle managers and then created a course of action for each of them which was to include training, new management responsibilities and a variety of learning experiences to ready them for promotion possibilities.

The second step in my plan was to work with Dr. Mark Maier of Chapman University's sociology department to create a Leadership Academy to expand the abilities and knowledge base of that group of managers. Dr. Maier, a well respected expert in leadership development. created classes that combine theory, application, and hands-on activities to provide new insights into leadership that can be immediately practiced in the workplace. Additionally, by virtue of the improved leadership techniques being used by this group, we expect to see these Academy graduates developing stronger leadership skills in their directreports.

In June, we graduated the first class of 31 managers from 20 departments. Leadership Academy II begins Sept. 10.

Finally, I organized a CEO/ Management committee that brings together department heads with a CEO representative. The goal of the committee is to gain greater input from the departments and to take advantage of their tremendous experience when dealing with critical operational questions. It also affords the department

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"When a department calls asking for a specific document from ten years ago, we can easily retrieve it for them within just a few minutes," said Nissenson. "Our storing and logging procedures ensure that documents can be located quickly and efficiently."

Nissenson, who also has a passion for dendrochronology -- the dating of past natural events through the study of tree ring growth -- has been with the County since 1973. His Records Center team includes Joe Quader, Ellie Garcia and Rey Concepcion who log, process and store records that are received daily.

Established in 1978, the Records Center is a centralized storage facility for inactive and semiactive County records. It is a full-service facility that provides retrieval services as required and authorized by each department. The Center, working with each department, determines how long records should be retained. It also monitors retention periods and notifies departments when records are scheduled for shredding.

Recently the Center relocated to a newer and earthquake-

retrofitted building on Grand Avenue. "Over the years, the center grew to the point that it was bulging at the seams and sagging at its beams," said Shirley Charity, Administration Manager. "The idea of a new Center originated in 2002 and, with the help of Walt Krause (formerly with CEO and now in RDMD), the Administration section, Antonio Pascual of RDMD's Architecture & Engineering and Records Center staff, we worked very hard and pulled it all together. The new Center is in a cost-effective building which is more efficient. safer and easier to navigate."

The facility benefits the County by minimizing storage costs for individual departments and agencies by utilizing low-cost storage equipment, maximizing available space and scheduling records for routine shredding. Departments also benefit by saving office space and storing unneeded documents off-site.

"The Records Center is one of those quiet, behind-the-scenes operations that provides an important service to County departments," said Charity. "We appreciate the great job they do."



New Center speeds document retrieval.

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heads a wider view of County issues, thereby adding another layer of experience to their professional development.

If you have questions about the future of the County, a suggestion about providing service more efficiently or an idea that improves customer service, send it along to this regular feature in your new, online County employee newsletter.

All questions and suggestions will be reviewed by CEO staff and shared with the appropriate department. CEO Jim Ruth will respond in this newsletter to the most representative.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE **BE A POLLWORKER**



UNITED, We Can Find a WAY 25 Years of Giving

During the summer of 2003, John Doe lost his job, and the home he shared with his wife and five children burned down. While looking for work, John and his wife struggled to support their family. Their voungest son was autistic and needed special help, and they all needed food and clothes. The family moved into a one-bedroom motel room and barely made ends meet.

Thanks to United Way, the Doe family is now back on its feet. The Family Support Network gave them one month's worth of rental

assistance through United Way's grant funds, and a box of food was given to the family to ease the financial burden.



Since then. John and his eldest son have found jobs and are gratefully able to provide for the family.

The Doe family is just one example of how County employees help people in crisis through their United Way contributions. Last year, 35 percent of County employee families participated in the campaign and raised \$884,696 for the United Way -- more than any Orange County organization in the employee giving category. This year's goals are to increase the number of participating employee families by one-half percent and to increase donations to \$1 million.

"As chair of the County's 2004 United Way campaign, I am excited to be working alongside Jan Goss, Director of Integrated Waste Management, on the our annual charitable endeavor." said Julie Poulson, Director of the Health Care Agency. "This is a wonderful opportunity to help provide solutions for the most critical human care service needs in our community. I look forward to working with all of you so that together we can make a difference in the lives of others."

For the first time, this year's

campaign is yearround with the majority of fundraising events scheduled for Sept. 22 through

Oct. 29. The theme is "United, we can find a Way, 25 years of giving," and it reflects the focus on unity, collaboration and partnering to accomplish a common goal, according to Poulson.

The kickoff festivities will be Sept. 29 from 11a.m. to 1p.m. on the Civic Center Plaza which will be lined with booths selling food and crafts. Last year's campaign opener featured 15 booths which raised more than \$9,000 on that day.

More information on United Way and a calendar of fundraising events can be found at http:// ocintranet.ocgov.com/ unitedway.

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For the Month of August

35 Years

James Berch Auditor-Controller

Barbara Pavek
Probation

Eugene Holum RDMD

Gary Ward RDMD Probation

William Daniel
Probation

James Belter Probation

Steve La Londe SSA

Laryl Lavin SSA

Betty Mendoza SSA

Sallie Rosenbaum SSA

John Delgado RDMD

Richard Gable RDMD

Robert Sweet RDMD

Nelia Castillo

CSS

Kenneth White

HCA

Isabel Munoz

HCA

Linda Post-Minko

HCA

Greg Parris

HCA

Maria Neuburger

Probation

Gary Bale

Sheriff-Coroner

Catherine Zurn
Sheriff-Coroner

Rene Green

SSA

Adrienne Zavala

SSA

Pamela Stellrecht

SSA

Carol Jolivette

TTC

Pamela Geady

RDMD

Chi Tran RDMD

Thomas Klems

RDMD

30 Years
Michael Miller
Auditor-Controller

Dennis Edwards CEO

Mike Strand Sheriff-Coroner

Maria Cadena

25 Years
Elaine Renner
Auditor-Controller

Alane Pritchard
District Attorney

County Connection is distributed monthly by the County Executive Officer James D. Ruth. The newsletter is published by CEO Media Relations. All suggestions and comments may be emailed to ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com or faxed to 714.796.8426.