

It's All About Quality

Quality, Productivity Commission honors teams for innovation, cost savings.



Story and photos courtesy Quality and Productivity Commission

City quality and smarts came through loud and clear in an annual awards ceremony.

The City's Quality and Productivity Commission held its annual recognition ceremony Dec. 13 to honor selected City Departments and workers that have demonstrated superior quality, productivity and efficiency in their operations and programs.

The focus was on projects that addressed quality of life issues and improved customer service initiatives, as well as those that saved money and demonstrated how to do more with less.

The event and reception honoring took place in the Chandler Auditorium in the Los Angeles Times Building.

Commission President Ron Galperin, along with fellow Commissioners, presented certificates of recognition to 2012's most notable and award-winning projects – and to their employee team members. Some 26 projects involving 20 City Departments, Bureaus and Divisions were highlighted by the Commission for collectively resulting in millions of dollars in savings.

To reward and encourage innovation and efficiency, the Commission hosts its annual awards ceremony recognizing and honoring employee teams whose outstanding projects and innovations improve the productivity and efficiency of the City. Many of these projects are self-initiated by front-line employees who sometimes spend years developing an idea into reality. Projects this year include utility and maintenance-saving initiatives, con-

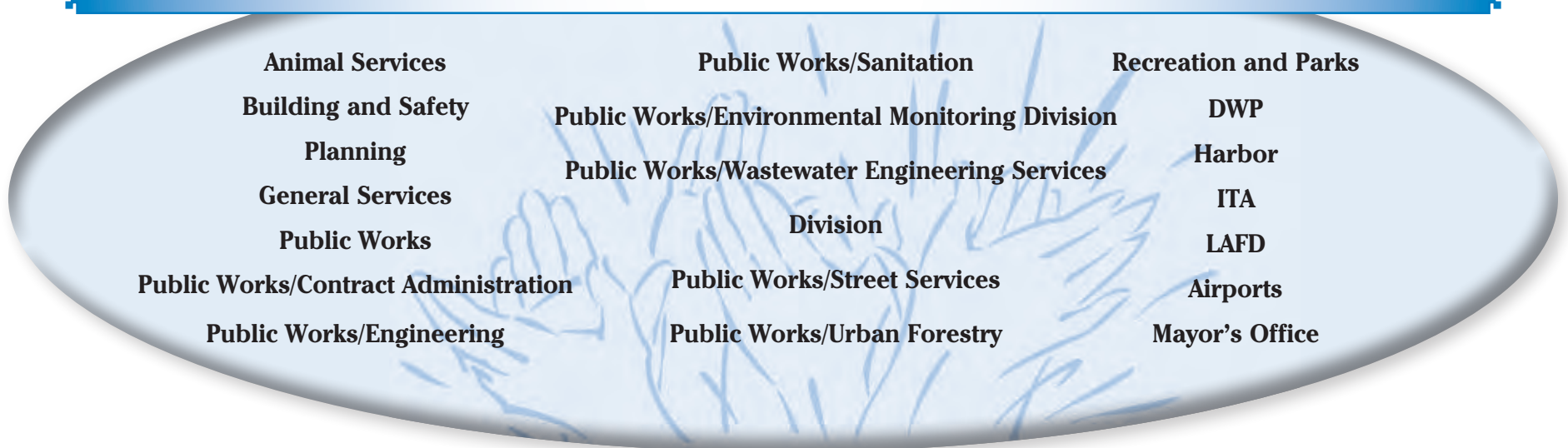
solidations, administrative cost-cutting measures, and waste-to-energy pilots.

The selection process consisted of the Commission's review of nearly six dozen applications from departments Citywide, said Awards Committee Chairman and Commission Vice President Ed Young. The Commissioners then conducted site visits of the semi-finalists, followed by the final selection of the projects that saved the City money, leveraged existing resources and/or enhanced customer service.

The Quality and Productivity Commission is a 15-member volunteer commission dedicated to improving the responsiveness, efficiency, and quality of services delivered by the City to the public. For more information visit: www.quality.lacity.org.

Congratulations to the winners!

Award-Winning Departments:



The Heart of Our City

*Animal Services
City Administrative Officer*

To respond to an era of more limited financial resources, Animal Services has sought new ways to adapt.

Public/Private Partnership: In one initiative, a public/public partnership was formed to overcome the lack of budget for staffing a new shelter in the North East Valley. Animal Services, the Office of the City Administrator and non-profit Best Friends Animal Society came together to further the imperative for L.A. to be a "no-kill" City. In the first half of 2012, thousands of animals were taken in, saved, adopted, spayed and neutered – with many more to come.

Specialized Teams: In a second initiative, Animal Services consolidated specialized teams – including the Wildlife Program, Permits Division and Animal Rescue into an operations unit trained to do it all, improving efficiency and self-sufficiency in saving animals in an emergency.

Inventory and Purchasing Control: In a third initiative, the Department sought to centralize and improve control of purchasing, inventory and delivery. \$500,000 a year in savings will mean saved jobs and saved lives.

Building a Better LA, Better

*Building and Safety
Planning
Public Works*

Development in Los Angeles has been time consuming, expensive and frustrating – both to developers and communities seeking to protect the quality and unique characteristics of their neighborhoods. Central to the initiatives to reform the process is Building and Safety.

Case Management: In the first of several changes, the Department now has a Development Services Case Management Office (DSCMO), where it works with Planning, Zoning, Engineering, Public Works and others are working to provide project applicants with one office and one case manager for applicants to navigate through the approval process. This new office, along with a new Economic Development Information and Tracking System, is beginning to cut bureaucracy – and costs for the City and for its customers.

Parallel Design Planning Process: Building and Safety has also undertaken a Parallel Design Planning Process, where a plan-check engineer is assigned at the initial design phase of a development. The process identifies potential problems issues early, saving up to nine months of plan check time. More than 40 percent of recently proposed major projects got permits in record time, helping to create jobs, strengthen our economy, improve quality of life and build a better L.A.

Putting It in Reverse

General Services

General Services/Supply Services is charged with procuring \$500 million in goods and service contracts for the City annually. In 2011, General Services began implementing a Web-based reverse auction for certain contracts to save money.

In a reverse auction, pre-qualified bidders bid against each other in a real-time auction. But, instead of bidding higher like in a typical auction, they bid in reverse. This results in more competitive pricing that drives City costs back, while driving savings forward.

In this productive race to the bottom, the City saves time – and possibly millions of dollars in procurement costs annually.



Well Oiled

General Services

Who would have thought that revising the schedule for vehicle oil changes could save so much money?

Looking for ways to economize, General Services contacted Toyota and Honda to see if required vehicle maintenance could be extended without voiding vehicle warranties. Oil changes were extended from once every six months/4,000 miles to once every 10 months/5,000 miles for Toyota hybrids, and once every 10 months/8,000 miles for Honda Civic hybrids.

General Services projects that this minor yet significant change will result in a \$3.27 million savings over the 10-year life expectancy of 11,000 hybrids in the City's fleet. Aside from the significant cost savings, the City has also reduced the volume of used oil that must be recycled.

One-Stop Shopping

Information Technology Agency
Mayor's Office

Over time, each department had developed its own way of managing and letting contractors know of opportunities to do business with the City, mostly using paper. This resulted in a cumbersome and byzantine system. Requiring City departments, commissions and boards to use a retooled Business Assistance Virtual Network (BAVN) has been a step in improving City procurement.

BAVN now provides all City Departments, Boards, and Commissions who administer construction, commodity, and professional service contracts an online platform to advertise, and respond to the City's Requests for Proposals (RFP), Requests for Qualifications (RFQ). Businesses browse and/or subscribe and be notified by e-mail of new and various business opportunities. Contractors can also see listings of more than 20,000 subcontractors, extending outreach and opportunity to small businesses. Documents can also be uploaded, downloaded and shared between departments.

With improvements to BAVN, competition, outreach and transparency are improving, too.



Here Comes the Sun

DWP

Using Federal stimulus money available for "shovel-ready" projects, the DWP undertook design and installation of the Adelanto Solar Power Project, the largest-ever municipally owned and operated solar power system.

With a more than 11 megawatt generating capacity, the Adelanto project is nearly 30 times larger than the previously largest 400kW solar power system installed by DWP at the Convention Center – and is the first utility-scale ground mounted system for the DWP. This project was also opportunity to partner with the providers in private industry, to leverage the experience of DWP personnel, to gain new knowledge and to put into useful service about 42 acres of surplus land.

Most of the project's \$50.6 million cost was financed with \$48 million in tax-deferred interest funds available through the federal government. The project also came in on budget and on schedule – and is serving as a template for future projects.



Thinking Inside the Box

DWP

Producing solar or other renewable energy is a challenge – and so too is delivering it. Realizing this, DWP engineers created a "Substation-in-a-Box." This much-smaller, much-cheaper, much-safer, kit-like alternative to a more traditional power substation can be customized to fit customer needs, both current and future.

Controllable remotely, these substations save customers money and save DWP up to nine months in design, installation and labor time.

Adopting the DWP's lead, community colleges and other utilities are getting on board with Substation-in-a-Box.

One If by Land, Two If by Sea

Harbor

Communication is critical in any crisis. The Port of L.A. is a 7,500-acre facility containing 20 percent of the nation's trade and providing three million jobs nationwide. Two recent Harbor projects are now in place to help prevent security problems – and to better respond when they may arise.

PortWatch: The Harbor Department Information Technologists and the Port Police formed a partnership with a software company to create a smartphone app called PortWatch – dubbed a "See Something, Say Something" project – so people can report or video suspicious security events as well as receive security notifications.

A New Generation of Security Systems: The Port Police and Information Technology Divisions of the Harbor Department partnered to implement four critical technology projects in the last year to improve interagency coordination and communications, domain awareness, emergency response, incident management, and field operations. These include radio systems, computer-aided dispatch and information management. Approximately \$8.6 million (88 percent of the \$9.8 million total) was reimbursed from federal and state grants. The Harbor will also be seeking grant funds to reimburse the ongoing costs.

To the Rescue

LAFD

A four-alarm call came for the Fire Department to move from a paper based Emergency Medical Service (EMS) reporting system to handhelds and Electronic Patient Care records (ePCRs) for patients served by LAFD paramedics and firefighters.

The project included development of new Department policies, training courses for approximately 2,400 personnel, collaboration with 59 hospital stakeholders, distribution and programming of computers and much more. The result is better data, better patient care, lives saved, less paperwork and millions of dollars in savings.



On Cloud 9

Library

Providing word processing using software installed on its 2,100 public computers in 73 locations was costly in staff time, technical problems, and licensing. Faced with a potential \$100,000 upgrade fee and continued maintenance costs, the Library decided to try something new by moving to the Cloud – and to free technology – using Google Docs and Microsoft SkyDrive.

Now, the Library system delivers to patrons improved word processing that provides greater choice and flexibility. It has saved the cost of the annual licensing and has reduced costly maintenance, releasing staff to assist patrons instead of servicing computers.

Historic Preservation

Planning

The Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) program has been key to saving, preserving and enhancing L.A.'s architectural history, and protecting some of L.A.'s most beautiful historic neighborhoods.

With significant budget and staff cuts, the Department created 16 Preservation Plans that follow the same design guideline template but allow for customization, including input from the City's 29 local all-volunteer HPOZ boards. The Preservation Plans have defined guidelines and procedures that allow decisions to be made more quickly. Planning streamlined the time it takes for an application and sought to improve the application process itself. As a result, Planning was able to submit 16 HPOZ applications at one time for City Council approval. Planning HPOZ staff cost savings amount to \$350,000 annually because of the new forms and staff changes.

Hitting the Green

Rec and Parks

On July 1, 2010, Rec and Parks/Golf Division ceased receiving any City funding support and began operating as a self-sustaining division. The Golf Division became responsible for all costs, including indirect costs, related to the operations and maintenance of the City's 14 golf facilities.

The cost of employees and their benefits is covered by the revenues produced by the facilities. The Golf Division now receives no subsidies from the City – and instead is contributing to a Golf Capital Improvements Account, along with \$1 million annually to other recreational activities.

The City's greens are looking and operating better, and producing yet another form of green for the City.



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A Better Track

City Administrative Officer
Harbor

For decades, the City has used a myriad of custom forms to be submitted in duplicate with original signatures for contractors to prove insurance and get paid. Contractors and others submit more than 10,000 forms per year. The forms were not industry standard and weren't always accepted. Their processing took many steps that could last from a week to even a year. And the forms did not verify – but merely attested that the insurance agents and brokers, the insurance companies, and the insurance itself were true and accurate.

The CAO's Risk Management Division developed Track4LA, an online system for submitting and approving insurance and bond compliance with a change in City rules that now allows for e-submission. Track4LA is now used by the City's other departments and registers the brokers and verifies their license status with the State.

With Harbor using Track4LA, approval of insurance is now instantaneous, with increased security – and cost savings to the City of \$262,000 per year.

Every Drop Counts

Public Works/Bureaus of:
Sanitation, Environmental Monitoring, Wastewater Engineering
Services, Engineering, Contract Administration
Rec and Parks
DWP

Water is becoming an increasingly more precious resource than even oil or gold – and every drop counts. Public Works and its Bureau of Sanitation are recognized for partnering with the Engineering and Contract Administration to help save millions of dollars – and even more gallons of water – annually, thanks to innovative and thoughtful water management. Rec and Parks and DWP have also been partners in helping Public Works put best practices to work. Among the noteworthy projects:

Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectroscopy for analysis of selenium and arsenic in wastewater: By replacing older methods for detecting these hazardous materials, the quality of our water is being increased – while costs are being decreased.

Stabilizing Recycled Water uses CaCl₂ and NaOH at the Advanced Water Treatment Facility at the Terminal Island Water Reclamation Plant in San Pedro. This facility was built to produce a maximum of five million gallons of recycled water per day for non-drinking purposes. The result is more, cleaner and better recycled water.

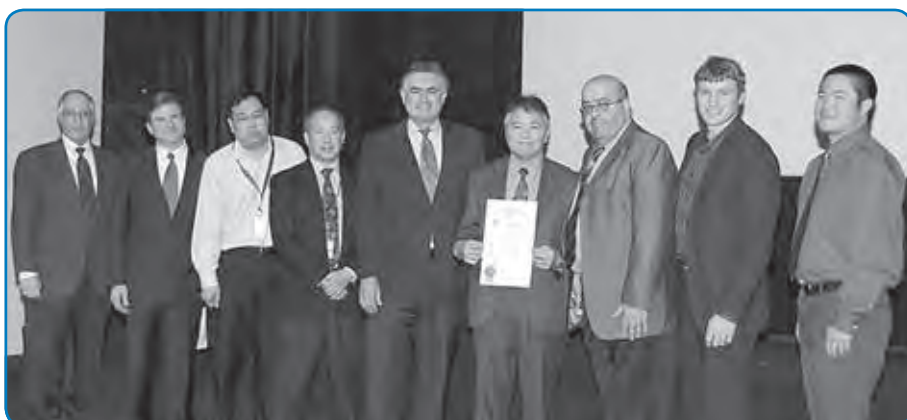
Los Angeles Wastewater Information Network System: The new system is designed to monitor and control tens of thousands of assets in the City's wastewater treatment and collection systems. The project also addresses a new control room at the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant, which will help integrate and manage operations and reduce costs.

Wet Weather Modeling: New sophisticated computer modeling is being used to predict the effects of rain on the wastewater collection system, to reduce runoff and its negative impacts on our environment.

Garvanza Park Best Management Practices Project: This project was constructed to reduce pollutant loading into Arroyo Seco and Los Angeles River by diverting stormwater and urban runoff from an 85-acre drainage area into an underground treatment system. The project's treatment of dry-weather and wet-weather runoff is expected to reduce annual pollutant loads by 85 percent and provide storage for approximately one million gallons for use at the park for irrigation purposes.



The Wet Weather Modeling Team from Public Works/Sanitation.



The Garvanza Park Project team from Public Works/Sanitation.

Trash to Treasure

Public Works/Sanitation
Airports
DWP

Sanitation Contracts: The DWP and Airports were looking to improve their refuse collection – and to reduce their costs. They turned to the Bureau of Sanitation.

Central Los Angeles Recycling and Transfer Station: This new facility provides the City with excess waste and recycling capacity that it can sell to commercial waste haulers. Sanitation has increased efficiency without adding staff, and is generating savings and revenues in excess of \$1 million a year.



Responding to a Severe City Wind Storm

Public Works/Urban Forestry Division and Street Services

Near-hurricane winds ravaged the northeast section of the City in November 2011. More than 500 whole trees were downed and another 2,000 trees lost limbs – downing power lines, blocking streets and severely damaging homes and vehicles. Within two hours, the Public Works/Street Services Operations Center was activated. By coordinating responses with the Urban Forestry Division and with the City's Emergency Operations Center, infrastructure failures were evaluated and prioritized so that response teams could be quickly deployed.

The Bureau handled more than 700 damage sites, with some 450 City staffers working around the clock. An estimated 3,700 tons of debris was also processed at the City's state-of-the-art recycling centers. The response tested the emergency operations the City had put in place. The event was nearly unprecedented, and so was the dedicated response, with cleanup in record time.



Waste Not, Want Not

Public Works/Sanitation
and Watershed

Zero Trash Discharge: Keeping trash out of the LA River and Ballona Creek is not only a good thing to do, but the City faces steep fines otherwise. Structural measures like putting special gratings over storm drains and other things like education, grate cleaning, and enforcement have made a drastic improvement. The Bureau commissioned a scientific study that showed how to reach the 95 to 100 percent reduction that will avoid approximately \$12 million in fines over the next 15-20 years.

