



June 2008

PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY ENHANCEMENTS

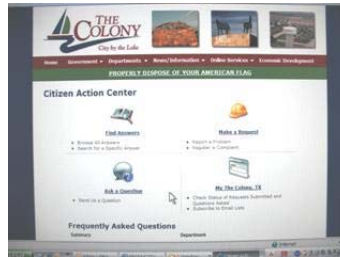
City staff continues to improve productivity and operate more efficiently. There are many things we have done to decrease costs, keep costs from rising as quickly as they might have otherwise, save time, and reallocate resources from one area to another based on priorities. The following is a summary of some of the efforts made:

- We have eliminated positions and shifted responsibilities to existing personnel. There is currently a vacant position in the wastewater department that we are evaluating the feasibility/impact of eliminating.
- There have been a myriad of actions taken to make better use of technology. In some cases this has allowed staff to spend more time on other functions and in other cases we have given customers greater and easier access to information. This reduces the amount of staff time required to provide information although, of course, staff is available to respond to questions as necessary.
- Code Enforcement staff is able to access more information remotely before taking enforcement action; this not only saves them time, but reduces the amount of fuel necessary to go back and forth between the office and specific locations.



- In the Police Department we have added equipment to allow officers to electronically capture data which not only saves them time, but eliminates the need to manually input this data. Chief Clark believes this has allowed us to operate with fewer personnel in Police Records and Municipal Court.
- Customers can access much more info on line. Some of this is general information while some is more specific. For example, some permit applicants can access info on their permits, staff comments, fees, scheduling etc. We are looking to expand this for more permits and services.

- Also, we recently rolled out our *Citizen Action Center* (GovQA) which, among other things, will create a database of questions and answers for citizens so those with similar questions can access info more readily.



- We have implemented a central control system for our irrigation system. While this doesn't cover all areas that are irrigated the system can be expanded.

These are just a handful of areas in which we have tried to make better use of technology.

- City staff is doing more work in-house.
 - One example includes collecting more bad debt accounts using staff rather than contracting out.
 - City staff (Engineering and Parks & Recreation) have designed many projects rather than contracting out.
 - Where reasonably feasible, we use existing city staff for lawn service and janitorial services for city facilities.



- City staff has been trained on updating web pages to keep the site current, rather than contracting out.



- Several steps have or are being taken to be more energy efficient. These include placing timers and motion detectors on office lighting, replacing several inefficient HVAC units, purchasing an energy management system for city hall, monitoring vehicle use to include reducing idling time when it isn't necessary, etc.



- We began purchasing less expensive recycled crushed concrete flex base material rather than virgin crushed rock. This material is mainly used for road base and also for bedding material for utilities. This change has shown a 60% cost savings.
- We have made organizational and schedule changes to maximize the use of resources. As examples we have reorganized crews in public works to make them more effective. We have also modified schedules at the waste water treatment plant to reduce the amount of overtime required.



- Several changes have been made to the development review process (example: we now have a defined three-week review process) which not only makes it easier for developers, but allows staff to spend fewer hours on this process in the long run.



Last year we compared the City of The Colony to three other cities with about the same population levels. We found that The Colony's general fund, which is the main operating fund for cities, was significantly less than the other three cities. In fact, The Colony's general fund budget was about 49% (\$18,700,000) *less* than one city and about 16% (\$3,670,000) *less* than the next closest city.

From our total operations to everyday procedures, city staff is looking for ways to reduce costs, improve productivity and become more efficient with our resources. We will continue to strive to make the best choices in both budgeting and time/staff management.