

ASPTEA News

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Message from the President

By Ron Ramirez

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WHAT CITY OF PHOENIX BUDGET CRISIS, JOB FREEZE?

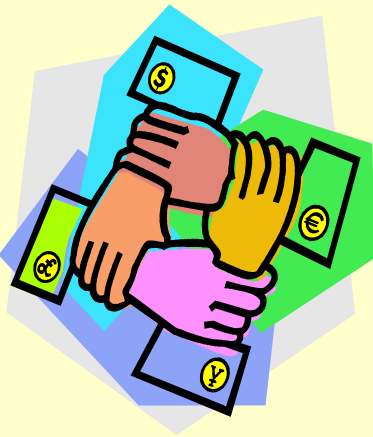
In recent months the City of Phoenix has been experiencing a wave of work force reduction, employee relocations, as well as employee terminations due to the financial crisis affecting the City. What is amazing during such difficult economic times is how management continues to grow and benefit from the economic downturn without a hint of slowing down or freezing themselves. Even some positions they supposedly cut have come back under the radar.

I guess its part of the American dream to show that the people who are in charge will always "Have" and those not in charge will NOT Have. It's wonderful to see that while the rich get richer the poor get even poorer. Life does not change for those in power.

This sounds like something from the 60's when the youth of the time was challenging the establishment and we actually felt good about it. We also felt that our efforts were not in vain. Forty years later the establishment is still alive and well, while the youth of the day are GONE! What happened? Did we realize that the establishment was too strong, powerful or just determined to survive? Are we really in an economic crisis and are the job freezes only for the working class stiff? YEP! Look around and watch how the City continues to hire high level staff while lower level employees worry about their jobs and economic stability.

What will be interesting to see is how these high level people plan on serving the public and doing the jobs that are eliminated? Maybe this is a new type of employee who is able to perform all sorts of duties while knowing nothing about what they're doing? The Generalist! I am a firm believer that every dog has its day and in the course of events will eventually find itself in the same turmoil it heedlessly created. Although the 60's are gone, the youth of yesteryear are still alive and well, and will resurface to win the eventual cause.

All we are saying is give us a chance!



Important Retirement Rule Change

Good news for those who were at one time either full-time temporary or job-share employees with the City of Phoenix. Previously, if you wanted to buy back this time into your retirement, the buy-back provisions only applied to pre-1982 employment. We have recently learned that COPERS has revised this rule to allow all employees to purchase temporary full-time and job-share time into their retirement. Attached is a link to the COPERS website where you can apply. Just click on the link titled "Request for Job Share and Temporary Full Time Service" <http://phoenix.gov/AGENCY/PHXCOPER/actform.html>

Performance Achievement Program (PAP)

Before last years budget cuts were finalized in March, we submitted a suggestion to the Employee Suggestion Program to change the PAP Process as a cost saving measure. We believe (and everyone we have talked to concurs) the PAP system to rate Management is overly cumbersome, labor intensive and expensive. In fact, we estimated that by eliminating the PAP system, the City could save approximately \$1,000,000 per year in manpower. You can read the suggestion and management's response in its entirety at <http://asptea.net/pap.pdf>. We thought City Management would be excited to receive a suggestion to save almost a million dollars annually. Here was the entire response we received in February 2008:

"The City Manager may be interested in forming a study committee to review the performance evaluation process after the current budget priorities are addressed".

Needless to say, we were disappointed in management's response. Considering the City was facing one of the worst budget shortfalls in history, we were surprised that management wasn't interested in such a huge cost saving measure. Besides being ridiculously labor intensive, we didn't even begin to get into how the system itself is flawed and does not even realistically rate management.

But since we completed last years budget process, we thought we would check in again to inquire about the status of the study committee. After months of the "brush-off", the entire response we finally received from James May, Deputy Personnel Director was:

"I am not aware of any further action being taken on this issue, and with the budget reduction scenario recently announced, I personally wouldn't expect that the City Manager would choose to address it at this point. If anything does transpire, I will try to keep you informed."

Maybe the City Manager doesn't believe it is a good time to address cost saving measures. But with the current budget situation, we think now is the perfect time. We are facing extremely difficult economic realities, and departments are being asked to make very deep budget and personnel cuts.

It doesn't seem unreasonable to ask upper management to take a look at their own processes and to strive to meet the City's own Vision & Values Statement of "We Learn, Change and Improve". But then again, maybe it is unreasonable ... it's not on their PA, (it's just on our PMG's).

Board and Commission Appointments

The City of Phoenix has over 60 Boards and Commissions that provide guidance to Mayor and Council on a wide variety of issues including transit, planning, the environment, the arts, veteran's affairs, youth initiatives and much more. This is a great opportunity to participate and improve our community. It also helps us build and grow our organization and makes our job easier helping you.

If any of our members are interested in serving (some restrictions may apply for city employees on certain boards) on a City Board or Commission, or if you know a good candidate such as a family member or friend, please let us know so we can forward your name for consideration.

For information on all the City Boards and Commissions go to: <http://phoenix.gov/phxb/bdcomm/index.jsp>

Warning about City Parks Safety

During the past few months, ASPTEA has been working with the City of Phoenix Park Rangers to address their concerns about changes in their duties and administrative changes. Unfortunately, these changes are being forced upon the Rangers without their professional input. Department management is subversively pretending to make it look like the Rangers are in agreement with these proposed changes, when in reality they are not. Parks managers, who are making these decisions, have no qualifications or experience as Park Rangers.

We believe that all the administrative changes began as a result of the Rangers asking for a pay raise and requesting additional equipment for their protection. The Parks Department initially responded by requesting that the City of Phoenix Police Department perform a risk assessment evaluation to consider the Rangers recommendations. The assessment was performed by Police management staff, who also have no knowledge about what Park Rangers do on a regular basis. During this evaluation process very little time was spent with the Rangers to accurately obtain a clear understanding of the Rangers' duties. Because contact with the Rangers during the evaluation was extremely limited, the results of the risk assessment were shared with Park Rangers at three meetings, during which most of the Park Rangers were given an opportunity to ask questions and give their input. The Park Rangers have expressed their dissatisfaction with the results of the risk assessment and the way they have been treated.

One of Parks Management recommendations is to reduce the authority currently held by Park Rangers, as well as the removal of their defensive tools including batons, pepper spray, handcuffs and exterior ballistic vests. Parks Management also wants to remove the blue/red light bars from their vehicles that distinguish them as Rangers rather than maintenance staff. ASPTEA has attempted to discuss these issues with Parks Management and were assured that these proposed changes are simply to make our parks a safer environment for our Park Rangers. We disagree and contend that these measures will increase gang activity, put the Rangers at greater risk; and ultimately create a more dangerous environment for people who use city parks.

During this process we alerted City Management of ASPTEA's concerns and to date there has been no dialog on this issue. We specifically communicated our concerns to Deputy City Manager Rick Naimark who has never made any attempt to address the issue with ASPTEA.

ASPTEA has researched other agencies who have attempted to make similar changes and found that the results have been detrimental to both staff and citizens. Our primary concern is to make sure that our Park Rangers and the citizens of Phoenix are not put in harms way.

Calling All Budget Suggestions

In an effort to help with the budget crisis, ASPTEA and the other employee organizations are working on ideas and suggestions for City cost savings. We are currently discussing several proposals including implementing the Rule of 75 to allow for early retirement (the State has an early retirement option); eliminating the PA process (see article in this newsletter); offering employees the opportunity to take mandatory or voluntary unpaid vacation days, 4/10 schedule citywide and/or telecommuting to save utilities. These are just some of the ideas we have submitted. We know our members are very creative and we're sure there are a lot more good ideas out there. Please let us know any ideas you have to save money or increase revenue in these difficult times. We don't have a lot of time and will be preparing our report very quickly, so call or email your ideas to us today!



New Member Recognition

Welcome to our newest members.....

Philip Isaacson	Victor D'Sa	Anna Gillespie	Janis Lair
Terry Lowry	Dennis Trujillo	David Hickson	Cathy Rendel
Joel Quinn	Juanita Ruiz	Timothy Sterne	David Mitchell
David Arnold	Daniel Rauscher	Mark Schroeder	Kathryn Lavery
Joseph Casto JR	Rene Brugman	Tammi Sargent	Joanell Brewer
Kristine Commerford	Tammy Arredondo	Cheryl Rohrs	David Kay
Richard Dickson	Ernesto Romero	Kathryn Lavery	Roy Haskin
Brenda Herrera	Mary Hammer	David Horney	David Moore
Cheryl Palmer	Leo O'Donnell	Jodi Nicholson	Mani Kumar
Reyna Rodriguez	Maria Romo	Gary Phillips-Garcia	Roger Gabriel
Melodie Mendivil	Sheri Harris	Lori Beuerlein	Vincent Fauland
Patricia Kankiewicz	Beverly Burke	Tammy Burkette	

DID YOU KNOW?

- **ASPTEA cannot receive interoffice mail?**
 - Please US mail or hand deliver any written correspondence to 111 W. Monroe, Suite 1200, Phoenix, AZ 85003
 - Or Fax to: 602-254-1373 (**except membership cards**)
- **ASPTEA has a Memorial Committee?**
 - Please call us at 602-254-8474 to let us know about deceased or hospitalized ASPTEA eligible employees or family members, we'll send a card and/or plant from ASPTEA.
- **ASPTEA is still asking for home e-mail addresses.**
 - Send to colleen.lockwood@aspte.com or joe.niles@aspte.com

Upcoming Events

Laughlin Trip

November 9-10, 2008

(still seats available..\$58 single, \$100 double occupancy)

ASPTEA General Membership Meeting – November (TBA)

ASPTEA Holiday Reception

December 2008

Recruitment Incentive:

Sign up a new member and we'll send you **\$25** for helping to build a stronger ASPTEA.