



Pathfinder

"Things are achieved by individuals, by collections of twos and fives and twenties, not collections of 115,000."
General Wilbur Creech

Teamwork Matters

A message from
the City Manager



JASON STILWELL

A great time was had by all at the 56th Annual Employee Service Awards Dinner. As I have previously stated, we truly value our employees. This event is a rewarding tribute to those who celebrated some significant milestones this past year. We enjoyed fun company and a good meal, with a mixture of serious and humorous stories.

What we do every day has a direct impact on the quality of life in Santa Maria. We work for the public. Our employees have a big impact on their respective departments, on our City organization, and on the community. It is their contributions, experience, dedication, productivity, cost-containment efforts, and entrepreneurial spirit, which collectively help to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of Santa Maria residents and businesses. Thank you.

Results of the Employee Engagement Survey will be shared very soon. Last month, full-time and part-time employees took part in the City's employee engagement survey. The survey closed on January 25th and results are being reviewed and finalized. Please join us on Wednesday, March 13th at 9:30 a.m. in the Public Library's Shepard Hall to learn the results of our survey.

Seating is limited. The first 120 to RSVP, through their Department Secretary or training manager will be able to participate in the live presentation. We will be recording this event and will have it available to all employees afterward. Similar to our kick-off event, the results presentation will include greetings from me, and **Jayne Anderson**, Director of Human

Resources and Records, as well as a webcast from Robert Lavigna, Director of the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement.

As I've previously stated in this space, we truly value our employees. The survey results will help us to further align our efforts to the City's mission and vision. A key part is making sure the City provides employees with the tools and training necessary to do their tasks, and produce meaningful results for the community. Proper compensation and staff, to meet the workload, are critical. Of course, the driving growth in our compensation is the sharply rising cost of retirement. Although not apparent by looking at our paystubs, our compensation has increased sharply in recent years, as it is projected to do in the coming years. The City paying higher compensation for our retirement benefits squeezes out the ability the City has to pay for other compensation.

The City faces continuing challenges with retirement obligations: PERS costs soared 117 percent since 2006-07 (\$5.4 million) to \$11.7 million in 2018-19. They are anticipated to increase another \$1.3 million in 2019-20, and reach \$16 million in 2022-23. These are annual ongoing costs and the biggest cost driver of employee compensation.

We are no different from other cities in facing serious financial challenges. We will move forward with the downtown revitalization, keep the peace, and grow more business and wonderful programs, and services for our residents. In addition, our goals for the coming year are to balance the budget, retain and recruit the best talent possible, all while becoming even more efficient. I look forward to serving the community and working with all of you.

Jason