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FROM THE COMMISSIONER'S DESK

Today there is a strong focus on customer service in the administrative agencies of Minnesota state government. It is easy to take that commitment for granted. Of course we are all aware that it's our purpose to provide the highest in service to the other agencies and organizations that count on us. However, the department's history shows us that there was a focused effort in years past to go beyond serving a compliance function and to be centered on customer satisfaction and best value.

It was in the early 2000s that the Department of Administration specifically introduced a new mission statement that had customer satisfaction at its center. In the years that followed, the agency worked hard to live up to that mission, to sustain it and make it real, over time changing old perceptions. Later, in 2007 and 2008, the agency issued agency-wide customer satisfaction surveys, for the first time in recent history asking their customers to give feedback on how Admin was doing at meeting customer needs.



We reaffirmed that agency commitment to customer satisfaction a couple of years ago, when we refreshed the agency mission and kept that focus on the customer at its core. And since then, we've continued to think about how we can listen to and learn from the voice of the customer.

Over the past handful of months I've had direct customer satisfaction meetings with other agency Commissioners and senior leaders to talk about their expectations, their satisfaction with Admin services, and what other ideas they had about how Admin could help improve their operations. All told I visited each of the 23 cabinet level agencies. In some cases, large teams of people came along to participate in the conversation, while in others, agencies prepared many pages of material to review, describing in detail experiences working with Admin and accompanying feedback.

These conversations laid an important groundwork. The responses provided a basic picture; our customers have an appreciation of the value-added services Admin provides, but they also have some questions, concerns, and emerging needs. Going forward, we'll continue to address these things and keep the dialogue going.

Looking ahead, this can be done through additional agency-wide surveys, focus groups and other methods we've employed before. But we also want to find new ways to talk to our customers and measure feedback on a continual basis, ensuring that we're there to listen and gather feedback at the point of service when it matters most. With divisions that each have their own unique customers, we also know there is no one-size fits all approach. Our divisions do a great job communicating with customers and measuring satisfaction, and we want to draw upon those strengths and insights across the agency as we continue to support a culture of customer service.



76%

Of Admin employees believe that Admin has a strong culture of customer service*

* 2012 Employee Engagement Survey

Q3 FACTS AND FIGURES

In Snowfall Response and Removal, Admin Steps Up so You Can Step Safely

The long winter may finally be over, and the spring season firmly established, but last quarter proved to be a particularly wintry one for Minnesota, and subsequently for Admin staff. This was especially true in the tail end of the quarter, as the snow and cold persisted throughout March and April. Consecutive months of snow and cold can work even the most patient person's last nerve, but thanks to the grounds crew in Admin's Plant Management Division (PMD), the people traveling the Capitol Complex each day found some relief and comfort in roadways, parking lots and sidewalks clear of ice and snow.

PMD responded to 31 significant winter weather occurrences throughout January, February and March. While the amount of snow that fell and the number of snowy days were not wildly above the averages, the timing and the nature of the snow created some especially demanding circumstances.

When overnight storms came, grounds crew reported for duty at the hour of need. More than 15 times they began work at 2:00 a.m. and worked for over 12 hours to ensure the Capitol Complex was ready for business. When temperatures fluctuated in the 30s and 40s, rain could quickly transform into freezing rain, sometimes even becoming wet, heavy snow from there. These dynamics challenged teams to ensure the response was proper and on-point. Rain in the air may pose little threat, but when meeting the frozen ground it could quickly become hazardous.



Thanks to PMD grounds crew, your parking spot won't look like this when you get to work.



Would you believe this photo was taken on April 23?

Under these challenging conditions, the grounds crew stepped up and got the job done each time. As the agency continues to highlight the importance of workplace safety and strives to prevent slips, trips and falls, PMD's work making the complex a safe place to travel by foot, car and other methods plays a vital role and is worthy of recognition. Visitors, legislators, and employees who park and walk the complex each day all counted upon these services offered by some of Admin's hardest working employees last quarter.

Other Customer Satisfaction Highlights from Last Quarter

- The prolonged snow impacted Fleet and Surplus Services (FSS) too, as it was all hands on deck to ensure surplus items were prepped and two auctions proceeded as scheduled during temperamental, ill-timed weather. It took a team-wide effort to move and manage the numerous vehicles in Arden Hills – receiving them, prepping them for display, moving them to the street for snow removal, and finally setting them again for customer pick-up.
- The Minnesota Multistate Contracting Alliance for Pharmacy (MMCAP) cooperative purchasing venture within Materials Management Division (MMD) introduced new regional reps. As MMCAP has grown to serve additional states and localities across the country, it has become increasingly important for their customers to have representation in the field, to help answer questions, respond to issues and make the most of MMCAP services.
- The Developmental Disabilities Council participated in "Experience of the Customer" sessions on the topic of K-12 education. These go beyond rating satisfaction on a "scale of 1 to 5." Students with developmental disabilities, family and teachers were asked to talk candidly about good experiences, bad experiences, and the key things that set them apart. This information will be used to take steps toward improving the education system for all.

15 days

In Q3 PMD grounds crew began work at 2 a.m., working over 12 hours to clear snow from the Capitol area

20,000

Approximate number of people who have downloaded DDC's* Autism Emergency Planning mobile app

* Minnesota Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council

1.7M sq ft.

Of state-owned property is set to receive a condition assessment from RECS* next quarter

* Real Estate and Construction Services

Study of State Administrative Functions Points the Way Forward for Improvement

Last quarter, Admin issued a comprehensive report to the State Legislature concerning the state's effectiveness at its administrative functions. The report was the culmination of many months of work collecting and analyzing data from across state government, comparing the data to other organizations in the public and private sectors, and discussing takeaways and opportunities for improvement. The study was truly of an enterprise scale, requiring involvement from staff all across state government, but Admin staff played a central role in the coordination and execution of the study every step of the way.

It all started with a proposal from the 2012 Legislature, known initially as the "Back Office Consolidation Act." As the name implied, the initial bill would have consolidated many of the state's back office administrative functions – such as human resources, procurement, finance and payroll – under Admin, similar to what was done with the consolidation of the state's IT functions one year earlier. The bill in its final form instead requested that Admin complete a study of the state's effectiveness at these functions under the current model, while also identifying opportunities to improve and reform.

From there Admin coordinated the study, contracting with IBM to assist with data collection, analysis and benchmarking comparisons to other organizations. Admin collected data on four different administrative functions from 40 executive branch state agencies and other entities in just four weeks, and then scheduled and facilitated multiple workshop sessions where agencies discussed the data in detail, along with what could be learned and implemented from it. Admin's Materials Management Division (MMD) took a statewide leadership role for the procurement portion of the study, while Admin staff in Financial Management and Reporting (FMR) and Human Resources (HR) did great work gathering data and responding to issues at an agency level.

All told, the results found in the final report are encouraging. They showed that the state does a good job completing its back office functions, in most cases measuring up to other organizations in the private and public sectors. That being said, there was inconsistency in how things get done across the state's various organizations and many opportunities for improvement remain. Today, Admin is keeping up the momentum gained from the study, and working with agencies to pursue improvement initiatives. MMD is involved directly in a number of these initiatives and the agency's Lean program will likely be leveraged for its continuous improvement expertise.

The positive outcomes from the study would not have been possible without Admin's efforts, along with the hard work of state employees from across the enterprise. As the follow-up work from the study continues to take shape, stay tuned for more news about the improvements being pursued in Admin and beyond.

Other Continuous Improvement Highlights from Last Quarter

- Risk Management Division (RMD) set a new high for timely first report of workplace injuries. The industry-wide best practice is 80 percent of injuries reported within three days. Last quarter the state met that mark, with 80.6 percent of injuries reported within three days! In past years, only about 40 percent of the state's injury reports were expected to meet this standard. RMD's recent efforts in this area, along with the new iRISK reporting system ([see last issue](#)), likely helped make this great improvement possible.
- Fleet and Surplus Services (FSS) improved their process for removing data and repurposing surplus computers. The new process has created improved accuracy in inventory of computers and a 35 percent increase in the number of computers that can be made available for re-use each day.

41

Fiscal notes coordinated by FMR last quarter

100%

Of attendees at MMCAP's annual member conference last quarter gave a positive review

Looking to Managers and Supervisors as Leaders in Employee Engagement

Data has generally shown that one of the most important factors in determining an individual's job satisfaction is the quality of their relationship with their boss. No matter the quality of the organization or the nature of the work, having effective working relationships between employee and supervisor is vital. The same holds true at Admin.

Since the refresh of the agency mission in 2011, there have been many efforts to support and enhance employee engagement at an agency wide level. Chief among them was the launch of an employee engagement survey to start a conversation about engagement. That survey showed that the agency was doing well on many fronts, but it also revealed areas for improvement. As the agency begins to strive toward some of those improvements, managers and supervisors are being called upon to be leaders in employee engagement at a direct, 1-on-1 level.

To kickstart the effort, Admin's Human Resources (HR) team brought together managers and supervisors last quarter for numerous training sessions and workshops where they developed new skills, shared best practices, networked with agency colleagues, and discussed employee engagement. More specifically, sessions covered communication, performance management, classification, vacancy-filling, and more. These sessions are important because they ensure that managers and supervisors understand their role, learn tangible skills, and receive the support they need to thrive. This in turn helps them engage effectively with their teams and build positive relationships and attitudes.



This marks the beginning of an agency focus in the coming quarter and fiscal year. HR is coordinating additional specialized training and development sessions and further opportunities for supervisors and managers to connect and collaborate. These efforts put employee engagement into practice and set the foundation for establishing positive work environments for all Admin employees.

Quarterly Achievement Awards



The following individuals and teams were selected to be honored with Admin Quarterly Achievement Awards. They were selected by their colleagues not only for their outstanding work last quarter, but also for the effort and professionalism they bring to their work every day:

Jay Johnston, [Plant Management Division](#) Val Larson, [Financial Management and Reporting](#)
Tom Baumann, [Strategic Partnerships, Enterprise Lean Program](#)

Florida Pharmaceutical Negotiations Team, [Minnesota Multistate Contracting Alliance for Pharmacy](#)

Sara Turnbow Laura Muetzel Rose Svitak
Alan Dahlgren Dave Hoang Justin Kaufman

Other Employee Engagement Highlights from Last Quarter

- Numerous state employees participating in the Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI) Class of 2012 celebrated graduation in March and April. The newest Admin graduates of this leadership development program include Ryan Allen of Real Estate and Construction Services, Carolyn O'Donnell of MMCAP and former Admin employee Jenna Bergmann, now with MN.IT Services. Applications are now being accepted for the [2013 class of ELI](#). ★

Have feedback about the Quarterly Updates? Email Admin.Info@state.mn.us.

Admin Quarterly Update

Q3 FY13

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER **JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH** APRIL MAY JUNE