



Department of Public Works

City of Baton Rouge
Parish of East Baton Rouge

Post Office Box 1471
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4, 2006

TO: All Department of Public Works Employees

FROM: Pete Newkirk, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: DPW Reorganization Update

Mayor-President Kip Holden held a press conference on April 25, 2006 outlining some of the major changes included in the reorganization of our department. The Mayor reemphasized his goals to improve customer service and increase efficiency within our department, while making our employees proud to be a part of Public Works. Attached is a copy of the organizational chart that was presented at the press conference. The reorganization will create a flatter organizational structure which will allow us to develop leaders within our department. This is critical as our workforce ages and we lose crucial knowledge due to retirements. I wanted to update you regarding the reorganization and give you some important dates for changes that have been implemented and changes that will be happening in the near future.

Some of the changes that have already taken place include the consolidation of all engineering functions. The traffic, sewer, streets and drainage engineering functions will all report directly to Bryan Harmon, who will be Deputy Public Works Director, Engineering and Planning. Jose Alvarez will be the Chief Construction Engineer and Ingolf Partenheimer will be the Chief Traffic Engineer. We are in the process of recruiting a Chief Design Engineer. In addition, Mark LeBlanc who will be the Assistant Public Works Director, Capital Improvements is working to provide professional management of the capital improvement funding with emphasis on transparency and accountability. We will also be embarking on a nation-wide search for an Urban Transportation Coordinator. This position, which will be unclassified, will improve the planning functions within our department and act as a liaison with the Planning Commission and our citizens.

Another very important change is the establishment of the new Complaints Resolution section. We have transferred employees from the Inspection Division, the Wastewater Collection division, the Bridge & Canal Operations division, and the Citizens Service division to create this section to deal more efficiently with complaint resolution. While many of these employees which are being led by Neal Bezet and Johnny Wallace are currently working together in their existing positions, a budget supplement will be brought before the Council in June for implementation on July 1 to officially place them in their new roles. Any other changes in this phase of the reorganization requiring amendments to the pay plan or the allotment will also be included in this budget supplement.

Another change that is being implemented is the consolidation of the operations functions under Tom Stephens who will be Assistant Public Works Director, Operations. The current Street Operations Division is being renamed Operations Division. The tree crews from the North and South Maintenance Lots are being consolidated and transferred to this division. This division will also include employees dedicated to urban forestry and landscaping. These employees will officially be transferred in their current positions on May 13, 2006. There are several other functions that will be reporting to Tom Stephens as indicated on the organizational chart.

We are also consolidating maintenance functions under an Assistant Public Works Director, Maintenance. This position is not being filled at this time, but will be filled in the future. Until this position is filled, the Building Maintenance Division will report to David Guillory who will be a Special Assistant to the Public Works Director. Wastewater Treatment, Wastewater Collection and Central Garage will report to me until further notice. One of the changes that will happen within the maintenance function on May 27, 2006, is that all of the employees in the Pump Maintenance section of the Wastewater Treatment Division will be transferred to the Wastewater Collection Division. This move which was recommended by The Montgomery Group, will enable us to respond to wastewater complaints in a more timely and efficient manner.

Another major area that we are improving is workforce development. We are committed to providing growth and development opportunities for our employees. As many of you are aware, we are currently in the process of conducting training for potential Maintenance Worker Supervisors. Shortly after all of the training and testing is complete in late July, we will begin the process of filling the vacant supervisory positions. This should result in many promotional opportunities within the maintenance series. We are adding two new positions which will be dedicated to this purpose. One in the area of safety and training and one in the area of employee relations to assist Monica Sprull who will be Assistant Public Works Director, Workforce Development in her new role. We will also be reviewing some of the positions in the maintenance and trades series, especially those requiring special skills and that we are having difficulty in recruiting, for possible changes in our 2007 budget.

Once these changes have been implemented and we have the majority of our leadership team in place, we can start to address some of the other issues that came up in the reorganization discussions. We will begin to develop master plans for operations and maintenance activities, master plans for training and education, process mapping and automation of some of our most important interactions with the community like subdivision review and contract administration. Eiad Odeh, who will also be a Special Assistant to the Public Works Director, will be assisting with process mapping and automation.

I want to thank all of the employees for their cooperation and input in this ongoing process. I would also like to thank Susan Reisbord of The Montgomery Group and Linda Hunt who will be the Assistant Public Works Director, Management and Finance for all of their hard work and insight during this process. One of the things that I have learned since I have become your Director is the level of commitment and hard work by the employees in this department. It is a pleasure to serve the citizens of this Parish with all of you.