

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Marie-Edith Michel, Chief

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- Coordinated and submitted the Departmental FY05 Proposed Annual Budget;
- Managed the participation of 200 employees in the Park Customer Focus Strategies Initiative. Primary attention was devoted to park user issues and included eliciting useful strategies from staff to strengthen our customer focus. The ultimate goal is to ensure that park staff, policies and operations work together to increase staff commitment to quality customer service, deliver superior value, strengthen customer loyalty.
- The Division completed its implementation role for the PDCO Committee (Park Planning, Design, Construction and Operations), resulting in the development of a new Park Development Process Handbook. Significant accomplishments include the revision of the Park Classification System; clarification of the role of the Functional Plans and Design Guidelines, and the establishment of explicit roles for project managers and team members in all phases of the park development process. The Division also coordinated training for 80 staff persons on the new procedures.
- Staff coordinated the Department's participation in the site visit by the CAPRA group including an all day tour of key Montgomery County park facilities and operations, scheduling a variety of mandatory training activities.
- Completed the FY05 Budget-based Organizational Chart used for position and budget control.
- Coordinated the details associated with the allocation of more than 60 positions affected by the comprehensive update to the Administrative Series.
- The 2004 Summer Intern Program, despite an uncertain start, was highly successful. A total of ten interns (3 graduate and 7 undergraduate students) were placed in Planning and Parks assignments. The interns and their respective divisions were very pleased with their accomplishments.

STATUS OF ONGOING PROJECTS

- **Quarterly Management Meetings** – The Spring and Summer 2004 Quarterly Management Meetings (QMMs), provided supervisors and managers with important information on departmental priorities, such as the Carry-In, Carry-Out program; Energy and Recycling; Volunteer Services; CAPRA; Park Customer Satisfaction; Trail Mapping and the results of the Park Customer Focus Strategies Initiative.
- **Staff Communications Training** – The Division continues to deliver the “Communication Skills: Developing Relationships and Enhancing Productivity” program designed specifically for non-supervisory staff in the professional, para-professional, technical and office/clerical staff job categories.
- **Recruitment** – With the lifting of the hiring freeze imposed during the third and fourth quarters of FY04, over 19 career actions were processed and finalized with many others continuing.

- **SmartParks** - The SmartParks system, now operational, consists of a complete inventory of park property and park facilities, in a format that makes it available to virtually everyone. This system will not only allow the Department to more quickly respond to customer needs and provide more accurate tracking and computing of the costs of park maintenance and operation, but it will also provide for better management decisions and establish the basis for improved performance measurement analysis and reporting, which will be reflected in future budget submissions.

NEW INITIATIVES

- **Strategic Visioning Process for the Nature Centers** – The Nature Centers currently operate as four separate entities. The vision is to maximize the potential of the nature center function by expanding the customer base and service capacity, strengthening linkages to Montgomery County Public Schools, modernizing outdated indoor exhibits and devising strategies to generate significant additional revenue.
- **Diversity and Cultural Competence Efforts** – The Division will take on a much more visible role in support of specific organizational development efforts in the Southern Region and Central Maintenance.
- **Customer Service Training** – The Division has developed and delivered a motivational and up-beat Employee Success/Customer Services Training Module, focusing on generating employee satisfaction, projecting positive attitudes and providing excellent customer service to both internal and external customers. An important feature of the job satisfaction aspect of the training is creating awareness about opportunities for continuous improvement and career advancement within the Commission.
- **Employee Development** – During the summer, Management Services led a presentation on Employee Success/Customer Services with seasonal employees of the Southern Region. This presentation will be expanded throughout the Department. The Employee Success/Customer Services session was also presented in the spring, as part of the Department’s Orientation for New Career Employees, and it was an outstanding success.
- **Forever Green Initiative and Energy Conservation** – Management Services staff is working with the County-wide Planning Division to promote Environmentally Friendly purchasing throughout the Department for a variety of purchases including vehicle purchases. In addition, staff is working with the departmental Energy Manager to decrease consumption throughout the department and monitor energy usage by facility.
- **Management and Fiscal Analysis** – The Budget Unit continues to provide technical assistance to the Department for setting park fees by utilizing historical cost information and calculating estimates. The unit also provides technical assistance to staff on procurement procedures and encouraged the use of department-wide contracts for various services to provide economies-of-scale and more efficient contract management.