

Your City News...

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The Elements of Cost Effectiveness

Larry Rains, City Manager

In their 2000-01 Goals and Objectives statement, the Mayor and Council of the City of Willcox established an objective to "Manage Government in a Fiscally Effective and Efficient Manner." This objective certainly is aligned with the initiative of many to reform government in general. From the Federal level through the State, County and into local government the emphasis is now being placed on cost effectiveness. Take for example, two of many recent federal laws concerning government operations. At the core of both the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 34 and the Government Performance and Results Act are requirements for better cost management, including providing managers and constituents with better cost information. This is a tremendous paradigm shift from the old rules of public administration which were to accomplish missions as well as or just a bit better than the year before, while staying within budget, and following procedures.

While interfacing the new standards developed and implemented by Federal directive with objectives established by the Mayor and City Council, the City of Willcox will establish fundamental changes in our approach to cost management and reporting that information to our citizens. Although GASB 34 requires all municipalities to implement the adopted criteria by fiscal year

2003, your City is actively implementing these practices today.

Two (2) of the methodologies that the City is currently implementing are

Activity-Based Costing/Management and benchmarking. Activity-based costing/management is a set of management information and accounting methods used to identify, describe, assign cost to, and otherwise report on the operations in an organization. This information and

methods are then utilized by the decision makers who have the responsibility and authority to control and improve operations. A primary example of this application is utilized in the City's street department. A thorough analysis of the "true" costs of the street projects that have been conducted over the past two (2) years has been developed, allowing the City to think more competitively in determining the cost of street improvements, preservation, curb replacement, and engineering design. We can now place certain aspects of this function out to competitive bid with private contractors. The program is tough and has led departments to find ways to drastically cut costs while improving services.



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General Election May 21, 2002. Community Center lounge. Polls open from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Request an early ballot as of April 18, no reason is necessary. Call the City Clerk's office at 384-4271, ext. 304.

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Where once only finance and accounting personnel understood the rules of cost management, now even the road repair crews will learn to use them when developing competitive bids.

The second element that is being implemented is benchmarking. Benchmarking utilizes an external point of reference, or standard, by which that activity can be measured or judged with an existing processes or activity within an organization. The City will compare the functions of government and the performance of processes to that of outside organizations to include governmental and private alike.

An example of benchmarking of revenue streams is presented below. It presents the City Sales Tax rates and Property Tax rates for a number of municipalities with similar populations as Willcox.

The City of Willcox can utilize this information to compare revenue streams and tax base, as well as assess our competitiveness for potential economic development projects. A thorough analysis of additional revenue streams and tax base is currently being conducted which will assess the net assessed valuation of the city and state shared revenues collected by the organization. Simultaneously, we are benchmarking various programs and services provided by these organizations. This will allow the City to analyze a combination of data both from the income and expenses perspective. More important, it will allow our organization to benefit from the success of processes

in other municipalities, and achieve the overall objective of providing cost effective programs and services to the citizens of Willcox.

Much of the collected data will assist in measuring the result process for the objectives outlined in the *2001 City of Willcox 5-Year Strategic Plan*. This document is now in draft form and is scheduled to be adopted during the months of May and June 2002. The strategic plan will align the resources of the organization to the focus areas that have been established by the elected officials. These focus areas are captured in the *Corporate Scorecard*. This scorecard is the City's performance measurement system. It also translates the mission and strategy into tangible corporate objectives and measures. The scorecard will give Council, staff and citizens a quick, but comprehensive view of progress across the focus areas and four perspectives: Customer, Financial, Internal Process and Learning and Growth. The scorecard can monitor progress toward customer and financial objectives while evaluating achievements in building organizational capacity for future achievements.

We are hopeful that our citizens will take the opportunity to review and provide comments on the 5-year Strategic Plan and the various components of that plan. We will have these documents available at the Elsie S. Hogan Library and at our website at www.willcoxcity.org in May.

Municipality	Population	City Sales Tax Rate	Sales Tax Collected	Primary Prop. Tax Rate per \$1000
Willcox	3,733	2.0%	\$1,206,891	\$0.7434
Benson	4,711	2.5%	\$1,744,229	\$0.5760
Holbrook	4,917	3.0%	\$1,900,000	\$0.1980
Williams	2,842	3.0%	\$2,300,483	\$1.2573
Thatcher	4,022	2.0%	\$1,766,206	\$.00810

City Council Considers Sales Tax Increase

For the past five (5) months, the City of Willcox has provided information to our citizens regarding the impact of the reduced revenue stream that has transpired due to the 2000 Census count within the incorporated city limits and the reduction in State Shared revenues as proposed by State Officials. These reductions will impact the General Fund and Street Fund services. These services include police, fire, parks, recreation, code enforcement, library, community programs, and of course street repair and improvements.

In an effort to best understand our citizen's expectations, the City developed a survey to ascertain the opinion of increasing taxes or reducing services and programs. The results of the survey indicated that 76% of those surveyed supported a tax increase over reduced services. Additionally, it was found that the majority of those supporting a tax increase would favor a 1%

increase. This would raise current city sales tax rate from 2% to 3%. You can obviously utilize the benchmarking table included in the City Manager's article as a point of reference to compare the tax rates of similar sized cities.

At the regular Council meeting held on April 1, 2002, the Mayor and City Council unanimously directed staff to proceed with drafting an ordinance to increase the city sales tax rate. During the ordinance adoption process, through the publishing and public comment period, citizens and business owners of Willcox are encouraged to attend Council meetings to make comment on the proposed city sales tax increase. Written comments will be accepted in the Office of the City Clerk, 101 S. Railroad Avenue, Suite B, Willcox, AZ 85643 until a decision has been reached. You may also email comments to: Wxcity@willcoxcity.org

Department of Public Safety



Louie A. Garcia, Director

🔗 NOW ACCEPTING NOTICE OF INTEREST...

The Willcox Department of Public Safety is now accepting notice or letters of interest from adults over the age of 18 for attendance at the Citizens Academy scheduled for August 2002. For information regarding this academy contact Penney Bell or Patti Ackerson-Rodriguez at the Police Department. There is no cost to attend this informative and valuable training academy. If you have an interest in law enforcement or would like to become involved in community policing, this academy is for you.

WDPS Staff Recognized

Staff members, Lieutenant Jake Weaver, Detective Cpl. Jose Rios, and Natalia Perkins, Evidence Technician, were recognized at the City Council meeting held on February 18 for their excellent service and dedication in the Betsy Graham homicide case. These individuals worked diligently and skillfully in compiling the evidence and re-investigating this 5½ year old case. Due to the teamwork and dedication of these individuals and others involved from the Department, the investigation has resulted in a successful culmination almost six years after the tragic crime was committed.

New SRO Position

The Willcox Police Department is proud to partner with the Willcox School District in implementing a School Resource Officer program. With assistance from W.A.S.A., the need for a School Resource Officer (SRO) was identified and grant funding was obtained to sponsor the position. The position is designed to work in conjunction with the school system and W.A.S.A.

The program encompasses many areas directed at helping students and faculty, education covering many areas such as law, legal rights, drug awareness, consequences to negative actions, and many other legal awareness issues.

Officer Joe Ferguson has been assigned as the SRO and he not only brings experience as a Patrol Officer with the Willcox Department of Public Safety, but has been dedicated to working with the youth of our community in various volunteer organizations throughout the years. Officer Ferguson is also the Explorer Leader for the Department.

NEW STAFF

Nicholas Poire has recently received his Officer Certification from the Southern Arizona Law Enforcement Training Center. In addition to receiving his certification, Poire also graduated with top honors in shooting qualifications. Although Nick is new to our police force, he is a familiar face in the community. Nick has been a volunteer fire fighter with the department since 1996, and prior to coming to our department, worked for Cochise County as a Correctional Officer. Nick is a graduate of W.H.S. and he and his family have deep roots in Willcox. Nick has always had a strong desire to serve his community in law enforcement, and we are very fortunate to have him join our department.

Kelly Armstrong joined our department as a Reserve Police Officer in December, 2001, and was hired as a full time Police Officer in January, 2002. Armstrong and his family currently live in the Safford area, and he comes to our department with 8 years of law enforcement experience. His experience and enthusiasm make him a valuable new addition to our department and we are very proud to have him on board.

Crystal Collins has joined the department as Humane Officer and Dispatcher. Crystal originally joined the department as a reserve dispatcher and volunteer fire fighter, and then moved into the Humane Division. Crystal has proven her ability to be versatile in her various duties throughout the department making her a valuable team member. Crystal is another familiar face in Willcox who was born at Northern Cochise Community Hospital and has lived in Willcox her entire life along with her family. Her knowledge of the area and interest in the Willcox community are unsurpassed, and we are very excited to have her join our team.



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New Library Service Offered

Nancy Guerrero, Library Director

Do you have a computer with Internet access? If so, that is all you need to take advantage of the new PIN numbers now being issued at the public library. The PIN number will allow you to access your library account to do various things such as request books, renew books, check on fines owed, etc. This is a service that we hope will be especially useful to those of you who just don't have time to come in and take care of those little details during regular business hours.

Check with any of the library staff the next time you are in, to request your number. Visit the library's web site at <http://cochise.lib.az.us> and click on the Willcox link to access your account and other services.

Department of Public Services and Works

Frank R. Gonzales, Director

The Arizona Department of Transportation has scheduled the next phase of pavement restoration projects within the Willcox corporate limits. Project STP-186-A(1)A/H527801C (Rex Allen Drive) is tentatively slated to commence in mid-May, with completion date of June 2002. It should be noted that the contractor (Granite Construction) will concentrate only on pavement preservation during this phase of the project. Additionally, funding the summer months, funding will enable this organization to commence reconstruction on Austin Boulevard, the project will encompass Austin Boulevard, from Maley Street to Wood Street. As these projects are finalized in terms of engineer plans, additional information will be disseminated to the general public.