

New Hanover County Customer Service Committee Meeting Notes 05/13/2009

Members in Attendance:

Tracy Dawson
Melissa Hight
Tammy Baggett

Tony Roberts
Dennis Ihnat
Jane O'Brien

Angelina Bernard
Jennifer MacNeish

Summary:

- Approved March 11th meeting notes.

- Discussed everyday examples of customer service.
 - Gina Bombolino of the Public Services Center has always displayed a strong interest in customer service. Recently, she took time from her busy schedule to help a Spanish speaking citizen who came to the Government Center. She spent 30 minutes interpreting for her at Environmental Health, then accompanied her to the Tax Department to further assist her.
 - An elderly customer at Walmart exhibited great customer service when she approached a committee member to offer her help with a cart stacked high with merchandise.
 - A 10 year old boy was at the Fresh Market to buy his mom a Mother's Day present. When he came out of the store and gave his mom her gifts, the total was more than the \$30.00 he had gone in with. When questioned he said the store gave it to him. They went back into the store and the mom was told that when the cashier rang up the sale the boy told him it was more than the amount he had and walked away. The customer behind him told the cashier that she wanted to pay for the entire purchase, and the cashier gave the young boy the gift for his mom.

- Discussed ways to get the word out to citizens about the services the county provides.
 - It was suggested that we use NHCTV to show a narrator going to every county department to explain what they do and to show the services offered.
 - The Register of Deeds office is currently working on this type of project with NHCTV.
 - Discussed all of the departments and services that are offered to citizens including 911, Library, Museum, Inspections and the Arboretum.
 - In particular, the Museum offers much more than exhibits. They also have a historian, curator, artifact preservation, education and summer camp.
 - The Library is also working with NHCTV on a show that will feature their services.
 - Discussed idea of creating a character with which people can identify, to go to different county locations to show how tax dollars are being spent.
 - It was recommended that we use different media, including TV, print and radio to get the word out.
 - One suggestion was to hold a monthly open house at each department to offer a learning exchange, build relationships and a offer a shared sense of community.
 - One employee from each department would attend this once a month event.
 - The Commissioners and Department Heads could also be invited.
 - Employee focus groups could also be formed to brainstorm additional ideas for telling our story.
 - A citizen appreciation day/county government week was also suggested. Each department could set up a table or a display to showcase their department and be available to the public to answer questions.

- The Winter Jazz Festival, sponsored by the Museum, is an opportunity to combine this type of event with other events to talk about the many services provided by the county.
 - One upcoming show on NHCTV will be “Ask Your Commissioner” with subjects such as the tax revaluation.
 - Classes held at the Arboretum have been taped to be shown on NHCTV as well as the Coastal Gardener.
 - These types of programs let people know they’re getting value and amenities for their tax dollar.
 - It was suggested that improvements to our web presence would also help tell our story.
- Discussed the RISE to Excellence Award
 - Department level awards were strongly encouraged, but not mandated.
 - They are a good idea and help the countywide recognition program.
 - Several departments have their own awards including DSS, Health Department, Arboretum and Library.
 - There are different programs that work for each individual department.
 - The countywide award has two levels, the Gallery of Excellence and the higher level RISE to Excellence Award.
 - It is not a competition. There is no limit to the number of awards that can be given in a particular period.
 - It is difficult for some people to think in a criteria based format so we are working on a more user friendly nomination form to help focus on criteria and provide space for a write-up.
 - We want to hold up the standard so the award remains significant and doesn’t lose its value.
 - Will also change pamphlets and send via interoffice mail to all departments.
 - Form will also reflect that a person or group can be nominated.
 - Agreed it is beneficial for departments to have their own recognition program because it doesn’t have to meet the same high level criteria as the countywide award. It is a way to recognize the day to day small things that employees do that mean a lot to their coworkers.
 - Discussed if awards subcommittee should try to obtain additional information when nomination form is not specific or descriptive enough to make an informed decision on giving out the award.
 - The new format might help clear up some of the unclear nomination content.
- Discussed the InterTrainers Program
 - We are merging our de-escalation train the trainer program with Human Resources’ InterTrainers. This will prevent a duplication of efforts and provide a more cohesive and sustained training program.
- Action Items:
 1. Recreate nomination form. (Tracy Dawson)

Next Meeting:

Date: July 8, 2009

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM