

## 2005 Pioneer Award for Quality Recipient

### Maricopa County Parks and Recreation



Recreational and Educational Opportunities abound at a Maricopa County Park.

#### **Company Information:**

*Highest Ranking Official:*  
William C. Scalzo, Director

#### *Contact Person:*

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#### *Type of work:*

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department is an appointed department of Maricopa County government. Our mission is to provide recreational and educational opportunities while protecting park resources for residents and visitors. Over 118,000 acres of land is managed by our Parks department.

*Workforce:* 88 Full-time Equivalent, plus volunteer staff

#### **Testimonial of Value** of the AZ State Quality Awards Program

We are grateful to AQA for the opportunity to apply for this award. The learning process in itself was a great benefit to the staff involved. We gained insight into our own organization and enthusiasm for improvement. The external feedback will provide guidance for future enhancement and improvement.

-William C. Scalzo, Director

#### **Highlights of Organizational Process:**

- Senior leaders create an environment for organizational learning by making knowledge sharing a requirement. Staff is encouraged to attend internal leadership development programs. Management develops employee performance plans which include education and training in support of the employee's personal and professional goals. Each employee's goals and objectives are directly related to a Managing for Results performance measure.
- Senior management is held accountable for their actions through the annual Employee Satisfaction Survey, direct customer feedback, and monthly public meetings.
- The department identified three important challenges: 1) increased urban encroachment; 2) continuing population growth; 3) increased competition for funding. These issues were addressed by incorporating grant writing, forming partnerships, and obtaining additional land to create buffers.
- MCPRD identifies current and new customer groups and market segments through numerous methods. Recent developments in response to this information include the creation of barrier-free trails, additional interpretive programs, and expansion into the wedding market.
- MCPRD utilizes a three-step complaint resolution procedure to review and address customer comments.

- MCPRD uses two performance measurement tools to support organizational decision making: Arizona State University Park Visitor Survey, and Maricopa County Employee Satisfaction Survey. The ASU Survey, conducted every three years, measures attendance, repeat customers, facilities utilized, and services. The later survey, conducted annually, measures effectiveness and efficiency, management practices, communications, and overall employee satisfaction. Internal committees evaluate the survey results, and are presented to employees. Each park supervisor is required to develop an action plan based on current data and trends identified from the surveys.
- MCPRD has an integrated IT infrastructure that ensures their data, information and organizational knowledge is accurate, reliable, timely and confidential. They ensure security and confidentiality of their data on the web by providing each employee a personal user identification and password.
- MCPRD demonstrates a successful and effective career progression program for their employees. Since 2001, 75% of Park Supervisors were promoted from other positions within the Department. They also take part in the County's Executive Development of Government Employees (EDGE) program for succession planning for leadership and management positions.
- MCPRD uses a variety of formal and informal methods to collect information regarding current employee satisfaction, well-being and motivation. Their primary approach is the County's Annual Employee Satisfaction Survey, while other methods include exit interviews, grievances, and safety satisfaction. Analysis of the 2002-2003 Employee Satisfaction Survey results indicated concern by employees in the area of communication. As a result, the organization created a diversified team to study the communication issues identified, which led to the creation of regional superintendent positions, and resulted in a significant increase in employee satisfaction scores in 2003-2004.
- MCPRD ensures and improves workplace safety in several ways. Their Safety Committee, comprised of a representative from each park, works proactively to identify potential safety concerns and implement immediate corrective action. In some cases, the Parks work in conjunction with other County Departments to rectify the situation (e.g., the redesign of floating walkway at Lake Pleasant). In addition, MCPRD issues a monthly safety newsletter and requires regular safety tailgate meetings to be held with staff at each park to keep the organization's safety goals in the forefront.
- MCPRD identifies five key value creation processes which include a) master planning, b) capital improvement projects, c) trails management, d) interpretative programs and e) recreation concessions. Key value creation processes are identified through the ASU Customer Satisfaction Surveys, allowing the organization to create new services for their customers such as archery, bike trails and competitive racing tracks. MCPRD also utilizes diverse teams of staff, partners and customers to determine the key process requirements for their value creation processes. Park master planning documents are integrated with recreational and educational planning and include both in-process and outcome measures.
- MCPRD describes many different methods used to control costs, including employee-led training sessions and use of volunteers as camp-hosts and free labor. The Department minimizes overall costs associated with project changes by holding regular meetings (safety tailgates, Outreach/supervisory meetings), as well as maintaining a high level of communication involving project development.
- MCPRD shows a slight increase in “% Rating of Overall Quality of Parks” from 91.9% in 2000 to 93.6% in 2003, with the overwhelming majority of respondents rating them as good to excellent. This high level of satisfaction helps to maintain repeat customers.