

Planning & Development Services Newsletter

July 2020



CITY of CLOVIS

A Message from Dwight Kroll



Dwight Kroll

It's hard to believe that another year has gone by and that this one marks thirty nine years for me here at the City of Clovis. In many ways it seems incomprehensible that that much time could have elapsed. On the other hand it got me thinking about how much the City has changed over that period and how many talented people participated in making Clovis the best (my opinion) community one could ever hope to live in.

Every day that I walk in the back door to PDS I am overwhelmed by the talent contained in this building. Talents that continuously deliver caring and professionalism to Clovis' citizens and our development partners. You can go to places where you know those employees just show up for a paycheck, but when you go to PDS it is so evident that you all show up to exercise your vocations.

So, a quick story here... Many years back, a tie and business attire was encouraged throughout the office as we attempted to gain the impression that we were on par with other professional planning organizations (read Fresno)...and then one day the tie mutiny occurred. Someone in our group had *(Continued on Back Page)*

A Message from the Interim Director

By Renee Mathis



Renee Mathis

There are **58** remarkable reasons why the Planning & Development Services Department thrives; yet there is one big change on the horizon that will leave a hole in this family forever.

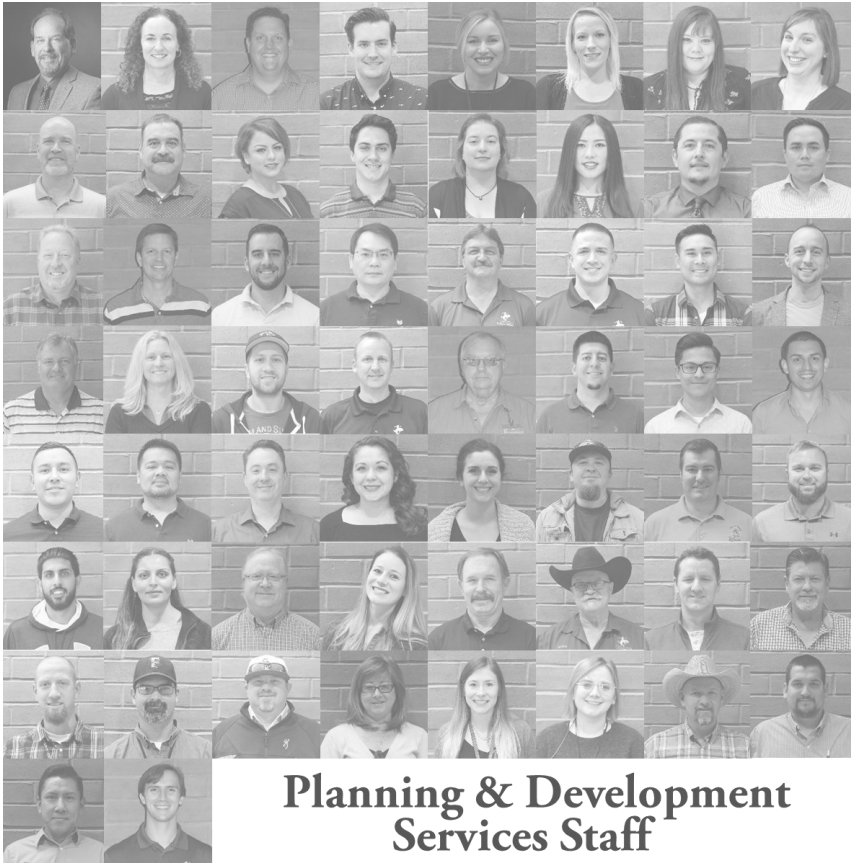
Over this past year, the 58 staff members in the Department worked hard to implement the vision for the City of Clovis as illustrated in the Clovis General Plan; a vision that has been researched, designed, and developed for close to 40 years by Dwight Kroll. In July 2020, Dwight will retire from the City of Clovis.

I am honored to be able to serve in the role of Interim Director for Planning & Development Services. Like all of the staff members in the Department, I chose to serve Clovis the best way possible by utilizing professional expertise and talents, a spirit of cooperation, pride, and most of all care; the foundations that make Clovis a community of choice.

I would be remiss to ignore the fact that COVID-19 hit us, impacted us, and now requires us to adjust and prepare for the unknown. The following articles highlight what our Department accomplished prior to COVID-19 and strive to finish during and beyond the pandemic.

Set aside some time and read through the next few pages; I promise they are worth the read! Be prepared to see, hear, and meet some of the remarkable staff in the Planning & Development Services Department. Read for yourself why Clovis is a community of choice.

Sincerely, Renee



**Planning & Development
Services Staff**

Planning & Development Services

Exceptional Core Values Program

By Doug Stawarski, Building Official

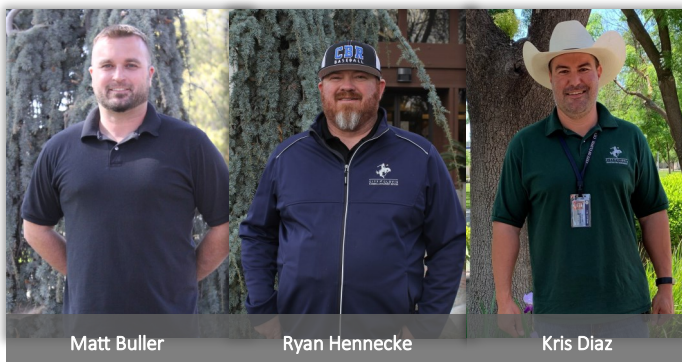
The Exceptional Core Values program began on July 1, 2019. This program provides for acknowledgment of those PDSers who display and exhibit our core values as stated on the program's nomination form:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| ◇ Community Service | ◇ Responsible Action |
| ◇ Stewardship | ◇ Enjoying Work |
| ◇ Teamwork | ◇ Leadership Now |

During the first quarter which ran from July 1st to September 30th, there were 11 nominations that identified 15 PDSers who exhibited exceptional core values. The Core Values Committee chose **Matt Buller** for his exceptional core values in doing his part to bring the Costco project to a successful conclusion. Congratulations again, Matt!

The second quarter ended on December 31st and during that period 8 nominations were received that identified 9 PDSers. The Core Values Committee chose **Ryan Hennecke** as the PDSer who demonstrated exceptional core values for helping every inspector complete their work in time to attend the canned food drive competition. Congratulations again, Ryan!

The third quarter ended on March 31st and during that period 11 nominations were received that identified 11 PDSers. The Core Values Committee chose **Kris Diaz** as the PDSer who demonstrated exceptional core values and a positive attitude! Congratulations to Kris Diaz !



Matt Buller

Ryan Hennecke

Kris Diaz

New Employees in Planning & Development Services



Shelby Elia is the new Management Analyst in the Engineering Division. Her duties include grant management and related projects in support of Engineering. Her educational background includes an MPA and a BS in Criminology. She began working at Public Utilities in 2018 and joined PDS in April.



Jose Sandoval joined the Development Review Unit (DRU) with the Engineering Division as an Engineer II August 2019. He is an alumnus of Lyles College of Engineering at Fresno State. His previous experience includes engineering functions for the City of Madera and Sierra National Forest Engineering.



Josh Howell joined the City of Clovis as a Business Workflow Specialist in August 2019. His duties include managing and supporting the EnerGov workflow program. He has an educational background in community and regional development, and experience in data analysis and system design.



Dave Merchen joined the PDS team in August 2019 as the City Planner. He graduated from Fresno State with both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Public Administration. He has 30 years experience in public sector planning and is from a family of planners.



Tatiana Partain joined the PDS team as a Principal Office Assistant in March 2020. While assigned to help all of PDS, her main focus will be assisting the Engineering Division. She brings over 10 years of professional experience from the not-for-profit sector, primarily with the Central California Blood Center.

Promotions in Planning & Development Services



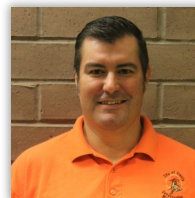
Renee Mathis
Interim Director
of P&DS



Ryan Nelson
Administrative
Manager



Travis Saether
Construction
Manager



Kris Diaz
Senior Engineering
Inspector



Matt Buller
Senior Engineering
Inspector

2019-20 Call for Projects

By Ryan Burnett, Engineering Program Supervisor

We successfully applied for and received over 5 million dollars in Federal funds for street construction this year! In September, the Fresno County Council of Governments (FCOG) initiated the federal 2019-20 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) call for projects.

The STBG program is aimed at funding projects that emphasize system preservation through new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration, preservation, or operational improvements. For this program staff submitted a total of five street rehabilitation projects for funding consideration. We were initially awarded three of the projects, but FCOG received additional funding allowing funding for a fourth project. These projects are scheduled to be constructed in the next two years. Below is a summary table of the project locations and funding received.

STBG Project Location	Total Project Cost	Federal Funds Received	Local Match
Villa Barstow-Shaw	\$ 816,480	\$ 722,830	\$ 93,650
Fowler Nees-Alluvial	\$ 1,196,690	\$ 1,059,430	\$ 137,260
Villa Bullard-Barstow	\$ 885,720	\$ 784,128	\$ 101,592
Fowler Ashlan-City Limit	\$ 550,000	\$ 400,164	\$ 149,836
Totals	\$ 3,448,890	\$ 2,966,552	\$ 482,338

The CMAQ program funds projects that will contribute to the attainment or maintenance of the national ambient air quality standards. For CMAQ funding consideration, staff also submitted five applications. The City was awarded two of the projects and they are scheduled to be constructed within the next four years. Below is a summary table of the project locations and funding received.

CMAQ Project Location	Total Project Cost	Federal Funds Received	Local Match
DeWolf & Owens Mtn. Roundabout	\$ 967,000	\$ 856,085	\$ 110,915
Shepherd Signal Interconnect	\$ 1,421,000	\$ 1,257,869	\$ 163,131
Totals	\$ 2,388,000	\$ 2,113,954	\$ 274,046

Submitting applications for grant funding definitely requires teamwork! A big thank you to all staff that contributed to the applications. A special thanks to the GIS team for all their hard work with the graphics, editing, and final production of the applications.



(Back Row) Bryan Araki, Ryder Dilley, Orlando Ramirez, Renee Mathis, Dwight Kroll (Front Row) Joyce Roach, Lily Cha, Becky Wharton, David Merchen, Ricky Caperton, Maria Spera, George Gonzalez

Transitions in the Planning Division

By Dave Merchen, City Planner

After more than 33 years of service with the City of Clovis, City Planner Bryan Araki retired in July of 2019. As it turns out though, maybe he wasn't really all that committed to the whole retirement thing. When asked, he agreed to come back a few weeks later to help the Planning Division work on some special projects and help his replacement get settled into the position. With that work completed, Bryan bid farewell for the second time at the end of December. In a career spanning more than 3 decades, the imprints that Bryan left on the community are too many to count. Perhaps his most significant success though, may have been his ability to foster a culture in the Planning Division where high performance and strong teamwork are expected, and staff members love coming to work.

With Bryan's decision to retire, the City began the recruitment process for a new City Planner in the spring of 2019. After a long search, Dave Merchen was selected by the Planning and Development Services management team to fill the role. Dave was born and raised in Fresno, and earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in public administration from Fresno State. Dave brings nearly 30 years of experience in public sector planning and community development. Prior to becoming the Clovis City Planner, he served as the Community Development Director in the City of Madera for more than 13 years. Over the years, Dave had an opportunity to work with Clovis on regional matters from time to time, and grew to appreciate the work produced by the staff and the work environment that seemed to entice planners to come and stay. When Bryan decided to call it a career, Dave jumped on the opportunity to finally become part of the City's team.



Fire Station 6 Conceptual Drawing, North Elevation C

Planning Projects

By Dave Merchen, City Planner

The workflow in the Planning Division maintained a steady pace in 2019, including 52 Development Review Committee pre-application meetings to discuss potential projects with applicants, 22 site plan reviews, 16 conditional use permits, 9 rezoning applications, 4 general plan amendments, and multiple tract maps. Project highlights include the approval of the first subdivision and annexation in Heritage Grove, with the approval of Lennar's Ranch 13 project near the intersection of Sunnyside Avenue and Shepherd Avenue. The City also approved the City Center Master Plan in Heritage Grove, setting the table for mixed use development east of Willow Avenue at International.

In addition to working on development projects, the Planning Division spent significant time in 2019 and early 2020 helping navigate the City through major shifts in state law that have changed the way development applications must be reviewed and analyzed. City staff began gearing up to implement requirements to analyze traffic impacts according to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead of congestion and delay. Changes in state housing law established new procedures and requirements for virtually every type of housing product.

Though the Coronavirus pandemic slowed development applications during the spring of 2020, the Planning Division anticipates continued activity throughout the City, including both existing and new urban centers. Progress towards the buildout of Loma Vista is expected, with new subdivisions and annexation proposals already under review, and consideration of a new mixed use commercial center on Shaw and Leonard Avenues projected for late summer or fall of this year. Proposals for master planned developments, subdivisions, and annexations in Heritage Grove are also expected to be submitted for consideration by the City before the end of 2020. With anticipated development activity and adoption of even more state legislation likely, 2020 promises to be a busy year for the Planning Division.

VA Facility

By Orlando Ramirez, Deputy City Planner

Staff was contacted approximately 2 years ago by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA had secured a 9-acre site located at the northeast corner of Herndon and Armstrong Avenues. The project included development of a 211,000 square-foot six-story clinic/medical office building that will be constructed in multiple phases. At full build-out, the facility is anticipated to include 22 physicians onsite.

The phased project will also include 1,085 parking stalls within a five-story parking garage and surface parking that will serve not only clients visiting the facility, but will provide off-site parking for the current VA hospital located in Fresno. It was determined that the project was not subject to local jurisdictional review or inspection. However, a courtesy Site Plan Review was distributed and comments were provided to the applicant.

Conditional Use Permit CUP2019-006 and Site Plan Review SPR2019-016 were submitted. Staff and project representatives discussed the City's process and the City's actual ability to regulate and take action on this specific VA Federal Project. On December 19, 2019, the applicant received SPR2019-016 conditions of approval. The conditions provided comprehensive property development standards. The VA engineer contacted staff to address these comments, reiterating that they would proceed with the project utilizing federal inspections and reviews, but would be willing to work with City staff in coordinating off-site improvements. VA representatives have also indicated that the facility will utilize its own police force, security systems, and 24-hour surveillance.

In conclusion, the project will be built over the course of several years. The VA is not permitted to own or construct building facilities until parking is provided for a 12-month period. The VA's intent is to first construct 305 parking stalls along the Herndon Avenue frontage in the year 2021. Once the parking area has been in operation for the specified time, construction of the first phase of the medical office building will begin. Lastly, the applicant will construct the 5-level parking garage, providing the remaining planned 748 parking stalls.



VA Six-Story Medical Office Building

Encroachment Permits

By Kris Diaz, Senior Engineering Inspector

In 2010, the City of Clovis began the implementation of EnerGov to issue and track permits. With the new program came the necessity to establish policies and procedures for handling and processing permits. As with many new practices, we have to continuously reevaluate them to make appropriate adjustments. In the course of doing so, we decided to eliminate the use of blanket permits for franchise utility companies to better control the work/restoration work associated with the permit and to more accurately invoice the work being done in the City right-of-way. However, eliminating the blanket permit increased the volume of permits exponentially. Adding the trending increase in permits strictly based on growth and development meant we outgrew the previous staffing structure.



Kris Diaz, Dan Lesmerises, Travis Saether, Trish Densmore

With the recent departure of the Construction Manager, we had an opportunity to again reevaluate the way we do business, so we worked with upper management to restructure the CM Division to better accommodate the demand on our staff. At this point in time, we have Trish Densmore, Construction Management (CM) Permit Technician, issuing permits and thus keeping the permitting backlog to a minimum. Dan Lesmerises, Engineering Inspector, previously primarily handled permits and is now acting in an advisory capacity and providing input and support for Trish on the more complex franchise utility permits and overseeing traffic control plan review so that traffic control associated with permits is consistently deployed and the "Traffic Alerts" group is adequately notified. This has freed up time for Dan to take on more projects and given him the ability to check restoration work as it occurs. Through this collective effort of the CM team, we have been able to make great strides in finalizing expired permits and have made many older permits current. The CM team is very proud of the work that Trish and Dan have accomplished in such a short amount of time.

CIP/SPS Year in Review

By Thad Avery, Supervising Civil Engineer

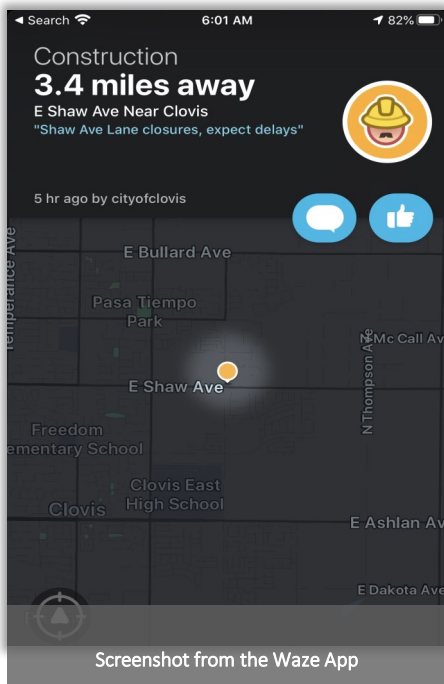
In 2019 the Capital Improvement Section (CIP) and Special Projects Section (SPS) managed a variety of projects involving sewer, water, and streets. Most have heard about the Willow widening, the Owens Mountain Roundabout, and the Shepherd/Minnewawa Intersection. The Willow project from Shepherd to Copper is the largest street project that the City of Clovis has taken on. Construction started in June 2019 and was substantially completed in May 2020. The Owens Mountain Roundabout project has been in the works with Caltrans for many years and was finally awarded in December 2019 with construction started in March 2020. The Shepherd/Minnewawa Intersection project turned on a long-awaited signal at the intersection in December 2019.

The department was also involved in many lower-profile improvements throughout the City in 2019. We reconstructed two alleys in the southwest area, two major streets on the east side of town, and resurfaced approximately 14 miles of local streets to help vehicles have a smoother ride. To help our residents stay active we constructed over 1.5 miles of new trail around Harlan Ranch and resurfaced over 1.5 miles of the Clovis Old Town Trail north of Herndon, upgraded the irrigation system at Rotary Park, and resurfaced the athletic court at the Clovis recreation center. Some of our dirty work included replacing sewer mains at six locations in the southwest. Like every year, we also use a great deal of our resources responding to traffic complaints and performing traffic and speed studies to help keep our streets in great working condition. We have many more large projects coming up in the future that will have a positive impact on our city. Great job CIP/SPS for keeping up with the task of improving the condition of our City facilities.

Following are some personal milestones for a few of our engineers: In October 2019 Kevin Gross obtained his Professional Engineer's license. In August 2019 Brinder Bassi became a father for the first time with the birth of his son Rovon. In November 2019 Ian King became a City of Clovis resident and homeowner.



(Back Row) Tim Barker, Brinder Bassi (Middle Row) John Cross, Thad Avery, Ian King, John Armendariz, Satvir Toor (Front Row) Thomas Cheng, Fernando Copetti, Kevin Gross, Colleen Vidinoff



Screenshot from the Waze App

DRU Update

By Sean Smith, Supervising Civil Engineer

Engineering has been working to find ways to improve our customer service and communications. We have increased our activity on social media, shared our traffic control with the Waze app, made the status of DRU plan reviews available on the City website, and made many new resources available from the City website. We are working toward all digital submittal and plan checks, together with scanning all our records to eliminate our physical storage needs.



Joe Alexander, Christian Esquivias, Jose Sandoval, Sean Smith, Gene Abella, David Gonzalez, Josue Campos

Gene Abella, PE

By Sean Smith, Supervising Civil Engineer

Gene Abella is one of the staff engineers within the Development Review Unit (DRU) in Engineering and he recently worked on the new Costco project. This January, he reached a career milestone by earning his Civil Engineering license. His past experiences include graduating from CSU Fresno with a BS in Electrical Engineering in 2003 and working at the City of Hanford before he joined the City of Clovis and DRU in March 2006.

CSS Portal and eReviews

By Joshua Howell, Business Workflow Specialist

The Business Workflow team is working to launch the EnerGov system's new Customer Self Service (CSS) portal. The CSS portal is a major upgrade that integrates systems and offers functionality not previously offered online. It will allow applicants to apply for plan and permit cases online and ultimately have an entirely paperless, remote process for plans and permits. The new portal comes with an integrated shopping cart to allow users to save payment information and more easily track and pay for invoices, and it marks the elimination of the credit card processing fee. We are expecting to see many more online transactions with the launch of the CSS portal. Also accompanying the upcoming rollout will be 'eReviews': electronic plan submission and reviews. Going paperless with plan submissions will not only save applicants the time of delivering plans but will also save them hundreds of dollars of printing costs per submittal. Over the past several years we have seen a boom in the number of portal registrations and online payments. The new online portal will certainly increase use further, and it will continue to grow as we onboard more cases into the EnerGov system. We have had positive feedback from our beta tests, and anticipate to open the portal to the public before the end of the summer.

COVID-19 Mobile Workforce Enablement

By Joshua Howell, Business Workflow Specialist

In March, the workflow team worked closely with PDS staff and IT to ensure that we were ready to work from any location. We were able to deploy a number of laptops to some staff, and the remaining staff opted to use personal equipment with VPN access to work remotely. The workflow team would like to extend a huge thanks to all of you for having a positive outlook and a calm attitude to the challenges that came from the change.

2019-20 Building Stats

By Doug Stawarski, Building Official

2019 was another very busy year in the Building Division. We processed 5,559 permits, making it the highest year ever. 2018 held the record before when we issued 4,950 permits. In addition, in 2019 we performed over 2,800 plan checks (not including plot plans) and performed over 43,000 inspections. As we come to the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year cycle we are sure to surpass 1000 dwelling units for the cycle with over 800 single family permits and 210 multi-family units. Handling the work load is a staff of seventeen within the Building Division. These individuals have over 310 years combined experience in the industry, with 154 combined years working for a jurisdiction. A team of experts!

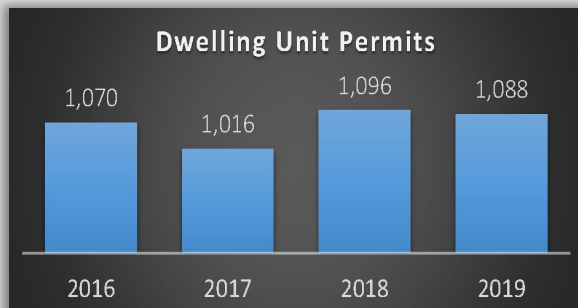


(Back Row) Joe Whitfield, Rafael Magallan, Billy Barrios, Jeremy Harrison, Jeff Harper, Mike McLemore, Ryan Nelson, John MacIsaac, Doug Stawarski
(Front Row) Heidi Crew, Eric Smith, Kim Correa, Nicole Stockle, Tara West, Joshua Howell, Brad Fowler, Ryan Hennecke

Dwelling Unit and Solar Permits

By Doug Stawarski, Building Official

Dwelling unit permits have remained fairly static for the past four years (see graph at right). 2020 appears to be just as strong because as of June 8th, we have issued 400 dwelling unit permits to-date. Roof-top solar activity also continues at a feverish pace. Even with Covid-19, as of June 8th, 530 solar permits had been issued, which could lead to a record year! So far, the record high number of permits was 1,822 permits issued in 2019, with the next highest number of 1,613 permits issued in 2018.



Training and Technical Certifications

By Doug Stawarski, Building Official

Even in the face of record workloads, the Building Division obtained 21 additional certifications and attended 394 hours of training in 2019. The Building Division currently holds 63 different certification types, literally ranging from A to Z. The certification types include: Accessibility, Building, Electrical, Energy, Fire, Housing, Mechanical, Permitting, Plumbing, and Zoning. They hold 141 technical certifications amongst the 17 individuals in the division. Some highlights for 2019 are:

- ◆ Rafael Magallan became a Certified Building Official on July 22, 2019
- ◆ Rafael Magallan became a Master Code Professional (one of 60 in the state of California) on March 31, 2020
- ◆ Jeremy Harrison obtained 14 certifications
- ◆ Brad Fowler obtained the Building Plans Examiner certification
- ◆ Joe Whitfield became a certified Residential Building Inspector
- ◆ Mike McLemore passed two of three modules for Certified Building Official

New Faces During 2019

By Doug Stawarski, Building Official

- ◆ Tara West began as clerical in March
- ◆ Joe Whitfield began as an inspector in April
- ◆ Joshua Howell began as a workflow specialist in August

Same Face....New Position

- ◆ Jeremy Harrison became a full-time inspector in January
- ◆ Nicole Stockle became a permit technician in September

Said Goodbye

- ◆ Kim Correa (clerical) in June 2020

GIS Day

By Stephanie Andersen, GIS Analyst



The first GIS Day map gallery and open house was on Wednesday, November 13th. We had maps available for viewing in the Council Chambers and the lobbies of P&DS, City Hall, and Police & Fire Headquarters. There was an educational map quest that lead visitors on a hunt for maps to answer cartography questions. In the morning there were vehicles from police, fire, and public utilities all displaying their use and love of GIS! In the afternoon there were software demonstrations by police and fire and a drone demonstration by police.

Approximately 120 people attended the event, including two science classes from Clark Intermediate School, City of Clovis employees, and local college students. The younger students particularly enjoyed speaking with the GIS-enabled vehicle operators and completing the map quest. Other attendees enjoyed browsing the displayed maps and watching the drone demonstration. The departments worked well together to present a successful GIS Day!

Canned Food Drive

By Becky Wharton, Principal Office Assistant

PDS staff came together to help the community by sponsoring a non-perishable food drive during the holidays. Staff was split into five teams comprised of a mix of our three divisions. Each team was challenged to create a structure made from the items that they collected. Each group came up with amazing ideas that far exceeded everyone's expectations! The structures were judged by Luke Serpa and Andy Haussler and they had a tough decision to make. Would they choose Team "One Can Make a Difference" with their video and portrayal of the hot air balloon festival at the fairgrounds? Or Team "IncrEDIBLES" model of the Loma Vista Clock Tower? Or the other model of the hot air balloon festival with cutouts of employees as on-lookers and a hot air balloon made of cans by Team "PDS Canstructors"? The model of Vincent Van Gogh's Starry Night by Team "Vincent Can Goghs"? Or the Clovis Avenue streetscape with a lighted Gateway to the Sierras sign by Team "We CAN Do It!"?

PDS donated **5,465 pounds** of food and \$365 to the Clovis Salvation Army; our largest food donation by over 3 times and double our largest monetary donation! PDS staff is very competitive and each year comes up with bigger and better ideas and builds stronger comradery with new teammates. This is one of our department's favorite ways to start off the holiday season. The biggest reward is always the feeling of helping and serving our community.



(Back Row) Trish Densmore, Eric Smith, Mike Harrison, Joe Whitfield, Kris Diaz, Tim Barker (Front Row) Tara West, John Cross, Bryan Araki, Becky Wharton

A Message from Dwight Kroll

(Continued from Front Page) t-shirts printed with ties, a Bronco Billy, and the name "Clovis Zoners" on them (see picture below). Now a good mutiny should strike a balance, and luckily the tie requirement disappeared, provided we didn't wear those shirts to work again. But the result was that we knew we had a job to do and we felt an ownership and commitment to the community regardless of how we personally looked. We wanted to be recognized more as those who served a community who put its trust in us. I see that same trait today in this organization; of people striving to do their best and to make a difference in the world around them.



It is my sincere hope that you continue to find your work here fulfilling; that you take some time to look at our citizens enjoying the spaces you designed; that you inspire your children to seek public service as a rewarding career; and that you also walk out these doors someday knowing you made a difference. I will sincerely miss working with all of you every day. I am honored to have worked with you all. Have fun and do great things....

Dwight

...and yes that is me in the vest and owning hair...