



City of Orange Township

29 North Day Street
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News Release

For Release: Immediate

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Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. Announces Four Innovations to Improve Citizen Communication with City Government:

- 1. Establishes Community Relations Division in Fire Department**
- 2. Establishes Public Information Kiosk in City Hall**
- 3. Replaces Automated Phone System with Human Assistance**
- 4. Provides Bilingual Assistance at City Hall for Spanish-speaking Residents**

Fire Department Community Relations Division:

In his capacity as Fire Director, Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. today announced the formation of a Community Relations Division to improve communication between citizens and the Fire Department. The goal is to increase the effectiveness of fire prevention efforts, discourage false alarms, and provide better coordination of Fire Department participation in community events.

The division will provide speakers to address civic organizations and business groups and develop programs in the Orange Schools to provide instruction in fire prevention methods and safety practices. Operating out of the Fire Director's Office, the division will reach out to citizens and community groups to identify unsafe conditions, and will coordinate the role of the Fire Department at community events, block parties, festivals, and concerts.

Firefighter Derrick Brown has been selected as the Community Relations Coordinator. The new position will create no changes to his work schedule or pay. Firefighter Brown has worked with the community on behalf of the Fire Department including delivery of Christmas gifts to children and provision of Thanksgiving dinners to needy families. He also created a fitness and health program to enable firefighter to remain fit for their duties.

Public Information at City Hall

Mayor Hawkins has appointed Sandra Barrera as Orange's Public Information Officer and restructured the duties of the job to provide for additional direct contact with the public. The move will make it easier for Orange citizens and businesses to get the help they need from city government.

Information Kiosk: Ms. Barrera will be stationed in a public information kiosk outside of the Mayor’s office. When people come to City Hall, Ms. Barrera will send them to the individual or department that can best help.

Telephone Assistance: When people call City Hall, instead of being confronted with an automated phone system, they will be connected to Sandra Barrera, the Public Information Officer. Ms. Barrera will direct their call to the proper city department or individual. This is important because often people call City Hall with a specific problem, but are not aware of which department can provide help.

Bilingual Assistance: Ms. Barrera is bilingual. Among her duties will be to assist the staff of City Hall departments in communication with Spanish speaking residents, to help Spanish-speaking residents understand rules, regulations, programs, and forms, and to provide translation of written materials when needed.

Sandra Barrera has 12 years of management experience in two property management firms, Kamson Corporation of Orange and Eden Management. She served as a point of contact for tenant, legal and maintenance issues.

Statement by Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr.

“Televising City Council meetings, creating a Community Relations Division in the Fire Department, and restructuring the job of Public Information Officer are three initial steps I have taken toward improving the flow of information from citizens to government and from government to citizens.

These steps follow upon the public meetings held by our transition committee. Making government more open and transparent is an important goal of my administration. We have accomplished these initial steps by redirecting existing resources and existing positions without creating additional costs to taxpayers.”

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