

GOVERNMENT FLEET

MANAGING PUBLIC SECTOR VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

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100 BEST FLEETS

City of
TROY



NAMED NO. 1

**HOW TO
PERFORM
A FUEL
RECONCILIATION**

**UTAH LOWERS
FLEET COSTS
THROUGH
EXTENDED
CYCLING**

 **OFF-ROAD EQUIPMENT**

DISPOSING OF 'YELLOW METAL'

TAKING OWNERSHIP IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Technicians need to take ownership of what they do. But I also think fleet managers need to take ownership of what they do.

Ownership is not just coming to work and putting in your eight hours and going home. Nowadays, you see many fleet managers just passing down orders, who don't have a clue that "Joe" is having a rough day on the floor. Maybe his son or daughter is sick or there is some other issue affecting him. A fleet manager who isn't sensitive to his or her staff and just pushes them to turn wrenches will get poor ownership and discipline problems. These types of problems can be avoided if a fleet manager simply went onto the floor and spent a few minutes getting to know each employee. This also includes having an open-door policy, where employees can come into your office and talk. Some fleet managers will say you've lost 10 minutes of wrench time if you spend 10 minutes talking to an employee. But when that employee leaves my office, I guarantee you, he will pick up those 10 minutes of wrench time. When an employee is in a better frame of mind, he will be more productive.

Not only must fleet managers be aware what is happening inside the four walls of their shops, they also must be aware what is happening in their communities and at City Hall. Fleet managers need to get involved in meetings at City Hall. You must know what is going on and to do that, you have to get out of your "fleet cave." We are all busy, but we have to push ourselves to go to City Hall meetings, attend seminars, and learn how to work smarter.

Not only must fleet managers know what is going on in their city, but they should also know how neighboring cities are dealing with issues confronting all of us, such as the new diesel emissions standards and reduced budgets. Fleet managers must be continually learning, and the best way to learn is by networking with fellow fleet managers. In my case, I make it a point to visit my neighboring fleet managers. Years ago, as a fresh fleet manager, I started an association that meets monthly because I wanted to learn as much as I could. We have held meetings since 1983. There were many fleet managers in my area with much more seniority, and over the years I learned from the best. These meetings are continuing today, nine times a year. There are 15-20 cities in southeastern Oakland County involved in these meetings. We rotate the location of the meetings and tour different businesses. For instance, we may tour a business that builds or installs snowplows. We will do a walk-through of the shop and the parts room and pick up ideas on how inventory is managed.

Another important point is to use the freedom of the press. When you do something special, inform the local newspaper. Don't just promote yourself, but have the reporter take pictures of your technicians. When these photos are published, it is a big boost for technicians. Laminate the article or photo and give a copy to your technicians. They will love it and put it in their tool boxes or send it to relatives.

It is doing all of the above, and more, that helps build ownership in a fleet operation. But the most important point to remember is that ownership starts with the fleet manager.



SAM LAMERATO

Sam Lamerato

Superintendent of Fleet Maintenance
City of Troy, Mich.

The 100 Best Fleets for 2010 were announced at the GFX Conference in Austin, Texas. The City of Troy earned the No. 1 spot on this year's list, with Sam Lamerato accepting the award on behalf of his fleet operation at a special awards presentation. Lamerato, a 36-year industry veteran, oversees more than 500 pieces of equipment for the City of Troy. He recently received the APWA's 2010 Professional Manager of the Year - Public Fleet Award. - Editor



COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

I applaud all the hard work that went into organizing the 3rd annual Government Fleet & Expo (GFX) held in June in Austin, Texas. I applaud everyone from the committed sponsors, to the expert speakers on specific subject material, to the 100 Best Fleets judges who worked so hard evaluating all the applicants.

The Expo was packed with golden nuggets of information that could be farmed from most any session — all to take back to our respective operations and implement as soon as possible within our cities, counties, states, and school districts. I am very proud to be one of the recipients of the 100 Best Fleets awards again this year and I am proud of every fleet manager who continues to pursue excellence through this venue.

There were literally hundreds of fleet applications that went to four dedicated public servants and past winners of the No. 1 position for "100 Best Fleets," who served as judges. It was their responsibility to read, score, evaluate, collaborate, and finally judge every application. The pay for each of them was the same — nada, nothing but a pat on the back for a job well done. This took a massive number of hours cumulatively for these men and women. Known as the "best of the best," these judges determined which fleets fit the criteria and excelled, which fleets could provide supporting documentation and then verified the claims made in each fleet's application, finally ranking each as one of "100 Best Fleets" in North America. Congratulations to City of Troy, Mich., and Sam Lamerato, named the No. 1 fleet in the country.

I would like to personally thank the dedication and hard work of every judge for their commitment to excellence: Larry Campbell, CFPF, of Ft. Wayne, Ind.; Sharon Subadan, CAFM and CFPF, of Hillsborough County,



MAIL STOP

Fla.; Marilyn Rawlings of Lee County, Fla.; Steve Riley of Coral Gables, Fla.; and finally our illustrious leader and founder Tom Johnson, who has been our public sector advocate and voice for many years.

Frankly, I am ecstatic our judges not only set the bar high by their own exemplary performance for all public fleets to continue the pursuit of excellence, but are now out of the competition. Those of us working our way to the top now may have a fighting chance to claw, perform, innovate, and implement new ideas in our fleets and document them — all to climb the ladder of rankings for the “100 Best,” with the hope to one day be No. 1 in the country, just like our predecessors. It was a proud moment for all

attendees as Bobit Business Media recognized the previous No. 1 fleets as “Elite Fleets” in the industry after announcing all winners of this year’s “100 Best Fleets” competition. The previous No. 1 cities are managed by truly exceptional individuals within incredible organizations.

I would also like to acknowledge Eric Bearly and Mike Antich, who are exceptional leaders at Bobit Business Media. They are innovative, great facilitators and organizers, and more importantly, they listen to the challenges faced by public sector fleet managers today and



KELLY REAGAN

respond in kind. Thanks for making our industry what it is today and for setting the “bar of excellence” for every public fleet manager and their organizations to be the very best!

Kelly Reagan

Fleet Administrator
City of Columbus, Ohio

MY FIRST, BUT NOT LAST GFX

This year’s GFX Conference was my first, but not my last! I

thought the Expo & Conference was well organized and administered. It was extremely valuable not only to me, but everyone I spoke to.

Everyone at *Government*



JOHN ALLEY

Fleet magazine and the 100 Best Fleets organization are to be commended.

I not only brought back one good idea, but several that will make our operation even better than it is now. I look forward to next year’s GFX, which will be held in San Diego.

John Alley

Deputy Director -
Fleet Services Division
General Services Dept.
City of San Diego

LEASING AS A FUNDING ALTERNATIVE

For me, *Government Fleet* magazine is required reading for fresh thinking, new ideas, and fleet trends. I was especially interested in the May issue article entitled, “Leasing: Not Just for Private Sector Fleets.”

The police vehicle no one saw coming, is coming.

DODGE
CHARGER PURSUIT

In my opinion, this is a defined trend in the public sector. Leasing can leverage annual appropriations by 3, 4, to 5 times. With leasing, \$25,000 can provide the buying power of \$125,000 with 100-percent financing.

I would like to make an important observation. It was stated in the article that "borrowing funds through the loan scenario was the lowest cost alternative." Public fleets are a different animal altogether, with bond ratings, etc., so if you factor in the process a municipality has to actually go through to get a loan (from 20-60 days) and fees from the bank, leasing becomes the cheaper solution even if the actual interest rate is a little higher.

A government agency I am familiar with (and see used

all over the country for public fleets) is the National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA). They can process a lease in a couple days, cut through red tape with non-appropriation language, and customize governmental packages up to 10 years with deferred payment options.

In today's financial environment, budgets are way too lean to use up capital resources to maintain existing

fleets. Public fleets have to look at outside-the-box financing solutions to help in the most challenging economy since the Great Depression. This is definitely not the time to say,



TOM JOHNSON

"This won't work here."

Tom Johnson

Author

100 Best Fleets Contest

San Francisco

COMBATING MISPERCEPTION

We, too, felt the sting of the "newly hired fleet expert." (See the Public Forum editorial, "Combating Misperception with Reality" in the June 2010 issue.)

Our fleet supervisor, with 30-plus years of experience through the ranks, had his office staff pulled from his supervision and given to someone who has been in the department only two years. She is the accounting person for several different divisions. Management doesn't seem to understand that idea of the SME (subject mat-

ter expert) and how support staff is an important part of everyday tasks. We would work on current and pending issues together. Everyone is an integral part of the whole process. The fleet supervisor does more than just work with mechanics!

Your perception of the misconception of fleet, as articulated in your editorial, is right on target. Unfortunately, our hands are tied as we watch the department fade. What were once important issues of the day are pushed aside for petty little procedural or employee scheduling issues. Where fleet was once all our passions, today it's just a job — sit down, shut up, and let the new "experts" run the show.

Author wished to be anonymous



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