



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Reassignment of Personnel and Reorganization of City Departments
New Chief Information Officer Named

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic, on his way home following another successful economic development trip to Israel, today announced a reassignment of personnel and reorganization of departments within the City, effective December 1, to fill the position of Chief of Staff that was vacated with the retirement of Dave Lieberth, to promote efficiency, and better coordinate the use of technology city-wide.

Service Director Rick Merolla will become the Deputy Mayor for Administration, Chief of Staff. Merolla previously worked for the City starting in the Planning Department, then as Deputy Director of Finance, Finance Director, and most recently Service Director for nearly 6 years.

“Rick has a breadth of knowledge not only with respect to City government, but of the City in general, and will do an excellent job as Chief of Staff,” said Mayor Plusquellic.

Planning Director John Moore will move to fill the Service Director’s position. Mayor Plusquellic recognized that “John’s background in planning coupled with his customer service approach will serve the citizens of Akron very well as he assumes his new position.”

Merolla will still be responsible for leading the City’s efforts in dealing with the issue of Combined Sewer Overflows, and Moore will take on the oversight of managing the Downtown Akron programs, including coordination of the City’s Downtown Operations Group which deals with maintenance, security, and programming that benefits Akron’s largest employment and entertainment center.

The management and scheduling for the City’s Lock 3 and Lock 4 entertainment venues will be handled by Tish Jernigan, who assisted in the design of the downtown venue in 2001 under Lieberth’s direction. Tish will become the acting Manager of Downtown Operations.

“Watching Tish in action at any concert reveals her enthusiasm for this special place,” said Plusquellic. “Now I am asking her to accept more responsibility so that Lock 3 and Lock 4 continue to provide quality entertainment summer and winter to our residents.” In 2012, more than 213,000 people attended summer events and another 50,000 are expected through the winter season.

Veteran Akron Police Department supervisor Richard Schmahl will become the City of Akron’s Chief Information Officer (CIO).

Schmahl will retire November 30 from his position as a sergeant in the Akron Police Department to accept a new position as an Assistant to the Mayor, Chief Information Officer.

For the past eleven years, Schmahl served as Information Technology Supervisor in the Akron Police Department. After graduating from Kent State University, he began his career as an Akron police officer in 1980. After six years as a detective, he became the first network administrator of the City's Safety Forces computer network in 1994.

In addition to his work with Akron's safety forces and IT system, Schmahl has also served on the State of Ohio's Interoperability Executive Committee, and recently was named a member of the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council Wireless Broadband Security Group.

"Rich Schmahl has been recognized by his peers as a leading expert in the application of technology to public safety," said Mayor Don Plusquellic. "Now, we are asking him to take responsibility for overseeing the deployment of new technology throughout the City."

Schmahl's responsibilities will include overseeing the City's IT system, telephonic and radio systems, and the integration of all other city technology. The position of CIO was a recommendation of a committee of business leaders appointed by the Mayor to review the city's technology needs.

Merolla and Moore will stay at their current annual salary (\$122,865.) Schmahl's annual salary will be \$102,315, consistent with salaries of Assistants to the Mayor. Jernigan's new salary will be set after a review by the Civil Service Commission.

Mayor Plusquellic also acknowledged that he will be announcing, in the near future, the person who will fill the position of Planning Director.

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