



Straight TALK

by John A. Arway

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Morale

As I told you in my first “Straight Talk” article, one of my top three priorities is to improve staff and public morale. We all know that our morale tends to ebb and flow like the tides and is occasionally high, but can be low. My challenge is to find ways to improve morale and shift the balance to find ways to motivate staff and improve agency programs to benefit our anglers, boaters and natural resources. Quite a challenge especially in times of doing more with less, or in today’s economy less with less! After all, we are a public service and conservation agency, and we need to continue to evaluate operations to improve efficiency and continue to enjoy doing it. So, here is part of my plan.

When I started about a year ago, I had some ideas about what I wanted to do, but I wasn’t quite sure how to do it. I talked to our Commonwealth Office of Administration’s Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Sounds like government bureaucracy at its finest doesn’t it? However, at the time, I wanted to evaluate my Environmental Services’ operation and improve it. OSS staff, Steve Kralik and Glenn Florence, had a process to do exactly what I wanted to do. They conducted a workload analysis of the Division of Environmental Services operation and are now working with my staff to implement changes. We also did the same thing with our Bureau of Engineering and Property Services. However, I wanted to do something more comprehensive for the agency as a whole and discovered OSS also offered a service called an agency climate assessment. We are all familiar with the issue of climate change in our global environment and how scientists of different disciplines are studying why it is occurring. The same concept can be used

to evaluate an agency’s climate—how we are doing as an agency and where we can make improvements. Steve and Glenn led us through this effort, and we are now looking at staff-driven work groups leading efforts to improve the agency both internally and externally. Additionally, my Executive staff and I met in a DiSC (Google it) training session to understand how to work better together, and I met with our Board of Commissioners in a facilitated training to understand our respective roles in decision making. We have also completed an analysis of our agency’s organizational structure using the services of the Office of Administration, which was presented at our July Commission meeting. I have also been crisscrossing the state speaking at various sportsmen and conservation group meetings to learn about your concerns and to see how we may need to adjust our programs to meet your needs.

I implemented a program called Employee Fishing and Boating Appreciation Day. Under this voluntary program, all permanent employees are encouraged to take one normally scheduled workday per calendar year to fish or boat with another Commission employee, a Boating Advisory Board member or a Commissioner. My staff does tremendous work, and it is important to me to have them better understand and enjoy the fruits of our labor. More importantly, I see this as a way for staff to teach and learn things about our business—fishing, boating, conservation and public service—that some of them could never do on their own. So if you see Commission staff on the water, please strike up a conversation with them and ask them any questions that you may have about Commission programs or even ask them for fishing and boating tips. This gives a new meaning to “A Bad Day of Fishing is Better than a Good Day at Work.” Perhaps you would like to join our team some day.

Your Director

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