

PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN FOR THE LAVACA COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission statement of the Lavaca CAD office is to provide excellent customer service and equity in all property valuation.

GOALS:

The Lavaca County Appraisal District (LCAD) seeks to inform its constituents by engaging in a pro-active communications program. These include property owners, civic and professional organizations, lending institutions, developers, attorneys, real estate appraisers and brokers, governmental agencies and policy makers, tax representatives and the media. This program recognizes that one of the most effective and quickest ways to communicate appraisal district policies and activities to citizens is by working in partnership with the news media.

POLICY:

The Lavaca CAD public relations plan was developed using the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) Standard on Public Relations. This standard outlines the requirements for developing and maintaining an effective plan. The IAAO is the internationally recognized leader and preeminent source for innovation, education, and research in property appraisal, assessment administration and property tax policy. The IAAO website is www.iaao.org.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The CAD Chief Appraiser is the spokesperson for responding to the media both verbally and written. In the absence of the Chief Appraiser the Lavaca CAD Board of Directors Chairman may provide information. The Chief Appraiser can be contacted at the following:
CAD office at 908 N Glendale Street in Hallettsville, TX

- Telephone at 361-798-4396
- E-mail address lavacad@lccad.net
- Mailing address is PO Box 386 Hallettsville, TX 77964-0386
- Internet Service for public access – www.lavacad.com

SPEAKING:

The district will work in conjunction with government agencies to provide information to constituents on matters related to property tax policy. This may include attending hearings, meetings or other events scheduled by the governmental body. The district will also participate in meetings with neighborhood associations, professional and other organizations, as invited.

REVIEW PROCESS:

The Chief Appraiser shall establish a communications review process to review and evaluate organization wide communication efforts and implement improvements where indicated. This review process can include departmental performance statistics, customer service surveys, customer interviews, peer review and direct observations.

In the event of a crisis the Chief Appraiser shall respond by the following steps:

- Identify the crisis
- Develop a plan to respond
- Contact all resources i.e. Board of Directors, attorney, staff to develop a final response
- Respond as quickly as possible with accurate information and provide staff with all necessary documentation
- Respond to any media questions

Customer service training will be provided to staff on a regular basis either by in house training or offsite training seminars to remind them of the importance of good customer service skills.

MEDIA:

The Lavaca CAD will strive to develop and maintain a good relationship with all local newspapers and radio station in order to provide property owners with important information regarding all matters of their property. The following is a list of all local media:
Tribune Herald - 361-798-2481 - e-mail - tribuneherald@sbcglobal.net
Moulton Eagle - 596-4871 - e-mail - moultoneagle@sbcglobal.net
Shiner Gazette - 361-594-3346 - e-mail - shinergazette@sbcglobal.net
Yoakum Herald - 361-293-5266 - e-mail - heraldtimes@sbcglobal.net
Texas Thunder Radio Station - 361-594-8433 - e-mail - texasthunderradio@yahoo.com

SPECIFIC PLAN ACTIONS:

In general the district will follow the timeline below; however, the district must remain flexible and react to changes and constituent needs as they arise; therefore, the timeline can and should be altered to respond to individual and special circumstances, and additional customer service and public relation needs as they are identified.

January – December

- The chief appraiser shall attend commissioner's court, city council, school board, and other governmental body meetings, and meetings of professional groups, neighborhood associations and other constituent groups, as invited, to provide information and testimony on matters related to property tax policy as invited.

January

- Review and development of public information literature and other materials related to property exemptions, renditions and special appraisals. Care and attention will be paid to updates for internal procedural changes and/or changes prompted by legal opinion and/or new legislation.
- Publish notice in local newspapers about the availability of Electronic Communications.
- Publish notice in local newspapers about requirements and availability of applications for deferrals, homestead exemptions, renditions and agricultural appraisals.

February – March

- The district shall conduct Open Meeting and Public Information training for all district staff. Training may include training videos and other materials developed by Attorney General's Office as well as internally developed materials.
- The district shall conduct Customer Service training for all district staff. Training may include external training courses and internally developed training material.

March – April

- Review and development of public information materials related to appraisal procedures, notices, protests and evidence production. Care and attention will be paid to updates for internal procedural changes and/or changes prompted by legal opinion and/or new legislation.

April

- Publish notice in local newspapers about requirements and availability of applications for deferrals, homestead exemptions, renditions and agricultural appraisals.
- Prepare press release for notices of appraised values and protest process.

May

- Publish notice in local newspapers about taxpayer protests and procedures.

June – July – Provide public notice of hearings for annual budget public hearings and approval.

July - August

- During strategic planning sessions - evaluation, review and planning/implementation of customer service and communication recommendations.

September

- Provide reappraisal plan on even numbered years

November – December

- Review, update and development of website content, specifically sections explaining appraisal district policy and procedures, to include but not limited to frequently asked questions, tax information, forms, district statistics, and property information.

PERSONAL POINTS OF VIEW:

It is recognized that all employees have the right to their personal points of view regarding any issue. However, personal points of view may conflict with the appraisal district's official policy. Therefore, appraisal district employees who write letters to the editor of any newspaper may not use official appraisal district stationery. If an employee chooses to identify himself or herself as an appraisal district employee in any personal letter or email to the editor, he or she must include language which states the views set forth in the letter do not represent the views of the appraisal district, but rather, are the employee's personally held opinions. Similar disclaimers must be given if an employee addresses a public meeting, participates in a radio talk show, or is interviewed for a radio or television program unless the employee is officially representing the appraisal district. Employees who are representing the appraisal district in any of the above formats must identify themselves as an official spokesperson for the appraisal district.

GENERAL OR ROUTINE ISSUES:

Broadcast media: Calls from broadcast media (TV and radio) should always be referred immediately to the Chief Appraiser.

Local print media: Calls from local print media regarding most departmental issues and programs may be handled by each department's Director or Assistant Director. The Chief Appraiser should be informed of these media requests---including the reporter and topic---either before or immediately following these interviews.

PERSONNEL POLICIES RELATED TO PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Litigation, Closed Session and Personnel Issues:

Generally, the business conducted by the Appraisal district is public, and therefore, is public information. Inquiries regarding pending litigation, matters involving a significant exposure to litigation, matters discussed by the Board of Directors in closed session and certain personnel-related information are exceptions.

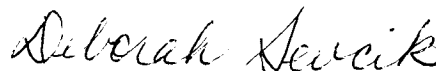
Executive session by the Board of Directors will be in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Government Code Chapter 551, Subchapters D and E.

Inquiries regarding pending litigation or exposure to litigation should be referred to the appraisal district's Attorney and the Chief Appraiser. Inquiries regarding personnel-related information should be referred to the Human Resources Department (Administrative Assistant) and the Chief Appraiser.

Board approved September 8, 2020.



Board Chairman



Board Secretary