

December 17, 2021

ELGIN insight



New STEM positions offer valuable training and enhance City's workforce

This year the human resources team worked with various departments to develop a package of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) employment opportunities including a summer internship program and new two-year positions. What could modestly be described of as a "wild success," these STEM opportunities provided unique and valuable experiences to Elgin youth as they continue their pathways to higher education, and they also provided desired career development for those entering the workforce in STEM fields.

Of the STEM employment opportunities offered, the largest program was the brand new STEM summer internship program which hired 10 high school juniors or seniors to work 30 hours a week from June to August. Once the internships were completed, Human Resources Specialist Tim Bennett was able to reflect on the program with both supervisors and students.

"Interns were so excited to be able to get their feet wet and gain education and work experience in STEM fields—an opportunity that wouldn't necessarily be possible without this program's creation," he said. "The STEM internship program gave students a chance to get hands on experience in areas where they have interest before they enroll in classes or training programs."

STEM Summer Internship Program Positions



Tim explained another important part of the internship program was that participants were able to learn life skills to assist them both personally and in finding a career in the STEM field.

"The interns joined our other [non-STEM] Summer Youth Internship Program participants in attending training sessions throughout the summer focused on financial responsibility, study skills and team building; resume and cover letter development; and mock interview sessions."

Feedback from the supervisors and interns was overwhelmingly positive. Many students would recommend the program to others, and some even want to try and come back for another season. As plans are developed for next year's program, Tim noted one thing he'd like to change.

"I think we can add even more value by letting interns work in multiple departments throughout the summer, so they can sample two or more experiences to help guide their education and career path."

Aside from the summer internship program, other STEM positions with varying experience levels were recruited for. One of those positions, created this year, was the ITS (Information Technology Systems) Fellow. This two-year position was created for someone with a bachelors degree or equivalent combination of experience. John Vixaychack, a 20+ year Elgin resident, Elgin High School graduate and former Communications Manager from the U.S. Army, was hired on and has quickly immersed himself into all things ITS. So far, John's favorite part about working for the City are the people.

"I can't stop raving about how much I love my job because of the people I get to work with," he said. "Jeff is a great mentor and we have a lot in common too."

The first project John worked on was rolling out the new sexual harassment training program that took users through a powerpoint presentation and then required them to complete a quiz.

"It was electric to watch the submissions come through," he said. "There was a combination of calculations, web design, light programming and workflows integrated in the backend so that the information could be automatically



TIM BENNETT
HUMAN RESOURCES
SPECIALIST

stored in each employee's file."

As for day to day duties, John works a lot on Laserfishe forms, in Salesforce and completing general ITS tasks. It's those special projects, however, that have been most interesting to John.

"Every project I get to work is exciting because it's new and something I can learn or a puzzle I can try to solve, and I'm usually getting to see a new place or work with different people," said John. "I've been able to work with different departments in city hall, police, fire and really get to touch every part of the city."

Looking ahead, John is looking forward to playing a role in the City's efforts to automate business to improve processes, save paper and save people time in their workday.

"One project I'm excited for in 2022 is revamping the open enrollment form and backend processes," John said. "There's a lot that needs to keep happening for the City to keep functioning, and I look forward to working on other projects that keep me learning more about how things work in the City."

The City's recent community survey showed that when it comes to the City's goal of being a "City of Choice," residents' top priority is for the City to support the enhancement of public schools and educational institutions to ensure a prepared and educated workforce. This entire STEM program has certainly supported that objective.

"The program was a success, and we will improve and expand it as the years go on," said Human Resources Director Gail Cohen. "I think everyone involved deserves a pat on the back."



JOHN VIXAYCHACK
STEM FELLOW,
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
SYSTEMS

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES & PRIORITIES

CORE VALUES

COLLABORATION



DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION



INNOVATION



STEWARDSHIP



DEFINED GOALS

CITY OF CHOICE



HIGH PERFORMING,
FINANCIALLY STABLE
GOVERNMENT



SAFE AND HEALTHY
COMMUNITY



PROMOTIONS - CONGRATULATIONS!

Daniel Wagner – Fire Battalion Chief – Fire Department

Christopher Clausen – Fire Captain – Fire Department

Joshua Soderberg – Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic – Fire Department

William Nangle – Fire Captain – Fire Department

Timothy Ryan – Fire Battalion Chief – Fire Department

Alejandro Gomez – Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic – Fire Department

Daniel Lamka – Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic – Fire Department

Vince Borrelli – Land Management Grounds Laborer – Forestry Division

Hollis Healy – Deputy Director of Records and Evidence – Police Department

Brianna Lopez – Permit Control Officer I – Code Compliance Division

NEW EMPLOYEES - WELCOME!

Alexander Halterman – Firefighter – Fire Department

Noah Vacco – Firefighter – Fire Department

**This issue includes promotions and new employees since September 21, 2021.*

RECOGNITIONS

To: Andres Gutierrez, Michelle Magallanes

From: Mary Cimms

Mary called to thank 311 and Public Works for collecting leaves she cleared from the storm drain.

To: Public Works
From: Anonymous resident

Resident called to compliment the crews on their street leaf collection. Great job!

To: Leigh Hugenberg ("Santa")
From: Monica Ostapczuk

Thank you Santa for actually reading each child's letter. It really brings a shocking huge smile to my kids face. They were so surprised that certain things Santa said hit the spot. My oldest thought all the letters were gonna be the same. Even my husband was like, "How the.... ?"

I told the kids Santa used his telescope to look down into our place to check on them.

To: Jerry Merritt, Timo Bello, Gus Hernandez, Liz Price, Thomas McCaffrey
From: Tim Gouge

Mr. Gouge called to say thank you and that you did a fantastic job fixing his approach on Kaskaskia, it looks great!

To: Michelle Magallanes, Todd Blissett, Clay Rasmusssen
From: Joanne Clement

Joanne called to say "thank you" for collecting the leaf piles on her street.

To: Water, Public Works
From: Sally Marriner

Elgin repaired a break in a water line today near my home. The workers informed us before they were shutting off the water and finished the repair in record time. Great job!
They informed us how to properly flush our pipes. They informed us to boil any cooking or drinking water until tomorrow evening when all safety testing is expected to be finished. Again, great job.

To: Public Works
From: Sharri Mortellaro

Resident called 311 to advise that the homeowners of Seminole Dr. would like to thank public works for the amazing work cleaning up their street today. She was very happy they were able to get the vehicles removed to complete the work. Thank you!

To: Neighborhood Services, Public Works
From: Judy Melvin

Thank you for having a stop sign installed by the exit where the Good Shepard sign is at Daisy/Nesler.

To: Kathleen Chantrey
From: Jay Richmond

Thank you Kathleen for your help. Thank you for your quick response on the fence inspection! You do a great job! Have a wonderful holiday season.

To: Public Works Traffic Division
From: Angela Carlson

Thank you so much for replacing the lightbulbs so promptly. It's one of the reasons I love the city of Elgin.

To: Public Works
From: Taeko Coker

Called to speak to supervisor to compliment the driver that went to her street to collect the leaves on the street. She stated that he was very polite and nice, bummered she was not able to get his name and thank him, so she asked to speak to the supervisor to let them know the good job that the driver did.

To: Toby Frey, David Smith, Jerry Merritt
From: Reid Voght

Thank you to staff for the completed street sweeping on Blackhawk.

To: Barbara Lopez and Will Taylor
From: Alex Kolowski

Good morning Barbara, the neighbor's yard looks AMAZING! Thank you so much for taking such fast action on it. I am so grateful for all who were involved to make it look so nice. Have a wonderful day.

To: Aaron Cosentino
From: Carl Misselle

Aaron, Thank you so much for the super presentation that you did last night. It was all, and more, than I had hoped it would be. I think you sparked a lot of interest in getting people involved in helping to

maintain the Parkway Rain Gardens or in starting one of their own. At around 9 pm last night, I received a call from one of the attendees who couldn't stop talking about how interesting the program was. I think she was speaking for all who attended. Thanks again. Carl

To: Crystal McGuire
From: Marsha Burks

Given there is no online capability to manage the landlord license accounts yet, for someone like myself who travels extensively Crystal's help has been IMMENSELY helpful. Without her timely responses my accounts would be in shambles. And most importantly she's always so very pleasant. Thank you!!!

To: Forestry
From: David Knoerr

David called 311 to compliment the forestry team on their efficiency with tree trimming today on DuPage Street. They worked so fast, thank you!

To: Mark McQueen and Michael Adams
From: Joan Albiniaak

The clean up they did (at the Lords Park Lagoon) is absolutely wonderful! I know they can't get the ponds totally free of algae in water and our humans are so rude throwing crap in the pond. Just wanted to say good job!

To: Forestry Division
From: Marsha Bryant

The crew took down the neighbor's tree this morning. They did a great job. They were efficient, fast and safe. And I am envious of their leaf blower!

To: Kate O'Leary, Fred Wimms and event staff
From: Pam Larsen

Called to send praise to Kate O'Leary and staff working Little Park of Horrors. Even during the rain, it was well worth the \$10. It was just fabulous. Hoping an event like this can be created for Christmas.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Just weeks ago, Assistant City Manager Karina Nava was recognized by the Elgin Hispanic Network as the 2021 Individual of the Year for her excellence in positively impacting the Hispanic community. The news was shared on the City's Instagram and Facebook pages and received hundreds of reactions and dozens of supportive comments. Congratulations, Karina!



Throughout the month of October, City staff raised awareness about breast cancer and raised money in support of the cause—over \$1000 in direct donations to the American Cancer Society campaign page along with proceeds from hundreds of police and fire campaign t-shirt sales. Throughout the month, many also wore pink on Fridays to support the cause, and photos were shared on the City's social media pages. Thank you to all who participated and made this monthlong campaign a success!



We want to see and share your pictures and videos. They may be used on the City's social media channels, website and in other hiring and promotional materials. [Send us photos from your workday and we can help share your story.](#)

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neighborhood**
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