



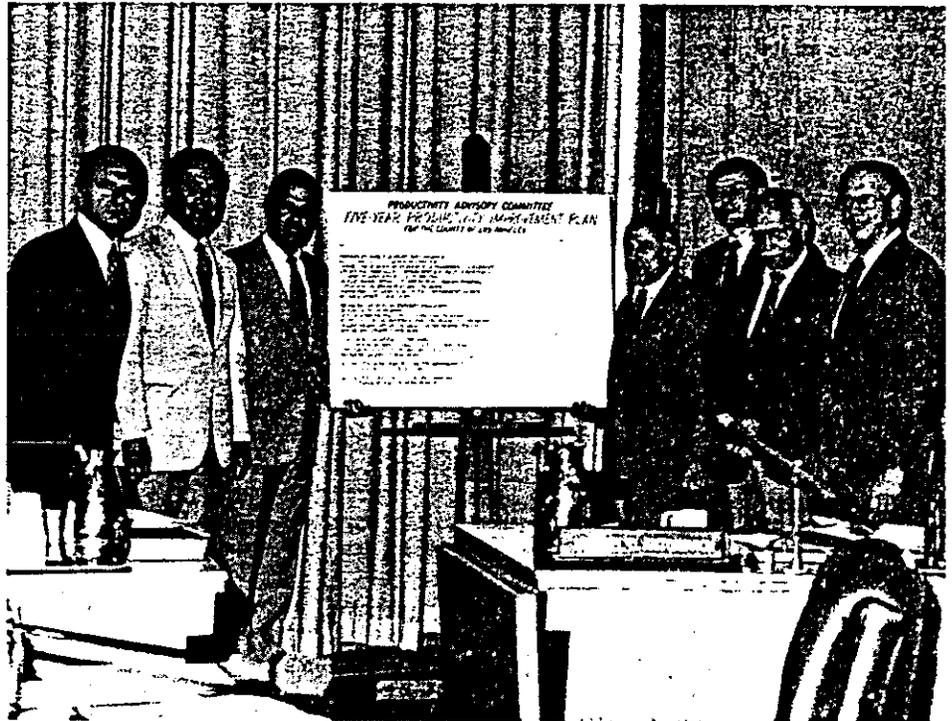
DIGEST

BOARD ADOPTS PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Quality Circles Tap Employee Creativity

For one hour each week employees in the same work unit sit down together to solve problems they have identified in their workplace. Their supervisor leads the meetings, introducing analytical and measurement techniques as they are needed to help the group reach sound solutions. When solutions involve other parts of the organization, appropriate management personnel are invited to a presentation by the entire group where management support of the proposed solution is solicited. Supervisors and line employees participate voluntarily.

This process is happening now at the County Department of Parks and Recreation. Known widely as "quality control circles," the approach is often cited as a factor in raising Japanese manufacturing to the respected position it now holds in the world marketplace. In the 1970's, quality control circles were successfully transplanted in American manufacturing companies, notably in aerospace and electronics, and have worked in office, banking and other



Dr. Arthur W. Gutenberg, Chairman of the Productivity Advisory Committee, fourth from left, and Committee member Dick Lynch, in dark jacket, present Committee's Productivity Improvement Plan to Board of Supervisors. One of the programs discussed in the plan is the subject of the feature article on Quality Circles in this issue of the Digest.

situations too. In recent years quality circle programs have been established in several municipalities with good results.

Quality Circles is a form of participative management which can succeed where it is acknowledged that the people doing a job know the most about the problems of that particular function. The workers as a group become a resource for solving problems and improving productivity, with increased job satisfaction as a natural outgrowth.

The quality control circle program at Parks and Recreation is part of a Coun-

ty-wide productivity effort officially launched when the Board of Supervisors established the Productivity Advisory Committee in June, 1981. Representing an array of private sector experience, the Committee recommended a variety of approaches to improving productivity, including quality control circles. Parks and Recreation Director Ralph Cryder made the concept part of his Department's Productivity Improvement Plan, as did a few other department heads. In spring of 1982, Doris Seward of the Department of Person-

(Continued on page 2)

NOVEMBER

1982

Volume 16 Number 7

County Employees Participate in Management Through Quality Circles

(Continued from page 1)

nel's Employee Development Division, organized orientation sessions by several consultants for departments interested in quality control circles. Represented at these sessions along with Parks were Health Services, Data Processing, Mechanical, Assessor, County Engineer-Facilities, and Flood Control.

From those presentations, Parks and Recreation selected Dave Farrell, a consultant with Quality Control Circles, Inc., to work with the Department in implementing quality circles. After Farrell's executive seminar, involving Cryder and eight other Parks executives, the concept was received enthusiastically by division and section heads at the Department's annual management retreat.

Next, Farrell conducted a workshop for fifteen managers who were willing to consider implementing quality circles. After two days of intensive training in analytical techniques and some mock "circle" exercises, nearly all of the participants were eager to start circles in their divisions.

Cryder and Administrative Deputy Jim Okimoto decided to start with a

pilot program of three or four circles. Ten first-line supervisors volunteered for the three-day Q.C.C., Inc. Leader Training Workshop. On completion, seven of the ten wanted to implement the program immediately.

The program started with work groups that most closely fit the criteria for successful quality circles: at least four people under one supervisor doing similar work at one location. Orientation sessions were then given to the equipment repair, accounting, and payroll sections to determine the employees' interest in the program. They learned that circles would work within the existing structure of the Department, that circle members would work together on matters of their own choosing, and that participation in circles is voluntary.

The first quality circle meetings were held on October 1, with every member of each work group in attendance. They were introduced to "brainstorming," an enjoyable and effective technique for generating a large quantity of ideas. They will use the brainstorming technique to create a list of problems for future consideration. Circle members will learn to use cause-and-effect analysis, pareto diagrams, and other techniques to help them in problem-solving.

After the six-month pilot program, Parks and Recreation expects to offer additional work groups the opportunity to receive training and form quality circles. There is no set lifespan for individual circles; they may continue to meet as long as their members feel they are making progress.

A contract for Q.C.C., Inc. to establish pilot programs in five other departments was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 24. Assessor staff have undergone training and held initial circle meetings on October 20. Orientation and training are in progress at Health Services, and Data Processing plans to start training in December. County Engineer-Facilities, and Flood Control are also considering implementation this fiscal year.

Each circle goes through a maturation process as new techniques are learned, program coordination improves, and the original circle model is adapted to fit the surroundings. In a few months the pilot programs are expected to give other departments an indication of how quality circles can

work in the Los Angeles County setting. An advisory committee which includes union representation provides guidance and support for each circle.

Parks Director Cryder, whose workforce has diminished by 50% over the past five years, said, "The changes ahead present serious challenges for all of us. I think that increasing employee involvement through the quality circles program will bring one of our greatest resources into focus. We can all benefit from that."

Social Security Withdrawal Update

As reported in the October issue of the *Digest*, the County of Los Angeles is scheduled to withdraw from the Social Security system on December 31, 1982. Currently, employees are required to contribute 6.7% of the first \$32,400 of their gross annual salary to Social Security. If the County were to remain in the Social Security system, employees would also be subject to the increased contribution limits scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 1983. The contribution increase will not be known until later this month.

In accordance with the Memoranda of Understanding regarding Fringe Benefits, the County is meeting and conferring with employee representatives regarding the "impact" of withdrawal.

A number of questions have been raised regarding individual employee Social Security benefits. Most questions revolve around the common theme of "What Social Security benefits will I get when I retire?"

In order to answer that question, it is necessary to know the individual circumstances, including the age of the person inquiring and his or her total earnings covered under Social Security. The best available estimate of an employee's benefits under Social Security can be obtained from Social Security administrative staff, who will be able to answer specific questions pertaining to the particular employee.

The first step in this process is to pick up a "Request for Social Security Statement of Earnings" from an office of the Social Security Administration.

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

EDITORIAL BOARD

HARRY L. HUFFORD
Chief Administrative Officer
Director of Personnel

JOHN CORCORAN
President
County Management Council

CHARLES R. STEAKLEY
Editor

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Room 726, Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: 974-1305

Retired Sheriff Employees Volunteer Their Services

Immediately after being sworn in as Sheriff of Los Angeles County in January of this year, Sherman Block created an Office of Special Programs. He made it one of the priorities of his administration to create a variety of volunteer programs that would provide better service to persons in the County, including services for which there is no funding, and to make use of the tremendous resource of talent available in the community.

While Sheriff Block anticipated that volunteers would come from a variety of sources, he felt that a primary one would be among retired persons. In fact, the first five volunteers to offer their services were retired members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Calling it "one of the most gratifying moments in my career," Sheriff Block brought these five volunteers into his office to thank them for their efforts and for the concern they have shown for their community by re-investing their great experience back into the Sheriff's Department.

Retired Sergeant Beverly May, a 28-year veteran of the Department, who specialized in child abuse and other youth matters, and retired Deputy Bob MacLeod, who has 24 years experience, both spent much of their careers at the Sheriff's West Hollywood Station. Sergeant May is now doing volunteer work with the Fraud Unit and Deputy MacLeod is working in the Fugitive Detail.

Retired Corrections Officer Charles Russell is working in the Inmate Classification Unit of the Custody Division where he spent 25 years, and Intermediate Supervising Clerk Cecelia McCormick, has returned to her office in the Records Bureau to share her 30 years of expertise.

A 28-year veteran, Deputy Kenneth Wegner, learned the skill of polygraph examination after he left the Department in 1979 and has returned to assist the Polygraph Unit in completing background investigations of prospective Deputy Sheriffs.

Sheriff Block encourages any individuals in the community who might be interested in following the example of these retired Sheriff's employees, to contact the Office of Special Programs at 974-4878. The Sheriff's Department is developing several programs for implementation in each of its eighteen decentralized Sheriff's stations.



Left to right—Bob MacLeod, Beverly May, Ken Wegner, Charles Russell, Cecelia McCormick, Sheriff Block.

Retirees . . .

The following people have retired in recent months after more than thirty years of service to the County:

Sheriff: Richard H. Gage, John Corbett, Raymond Salazar, Gilbert D. Gwaltney, Earnestine R. Abrahams, Richard D. Winter, Victor L. Alberts, Donald Bricker, Ronald R. Ellison, Richard Gage.

Fire: Gerald Molden, Paul E. Van de Wetering.

Mechanical: Andrew Mortland, Vincent A. Hill, Henry Oyama, Charles E. Potts, John A. Ghiotto.

Health Services: Joseph R. Bateman, Lois J. Hall, Anthony Navarro, Robert J. Talbert, Wilma J. Callahan, Juanita B. English, Agnes Inbrie.

Public Health Program: Phyllis Cazenave, Lois Jacqueline Hall.

DPSS: Barbara Paulson, Albert E. Wallace, Bertha M. Whigham.

Building Services: James Chapman, Billy R. Dale.

Road: Robert L. Sanchez, Gabriel Trouw.

Medical Center: Concepcion Barberia, Sears R. Powell.

Also: Gilbert Fernandez, Auditor Control; Billie E. Nunn, Assessor; William K. Challoner, Flood Control; Bruce Edson, Engineer; Jesse G. January, Parks and Recreation; Ernestine A. Martin, LAC/USC Medical Center.

The following have retired with over twenty-five years of County service:

DPSS: Virginia Denetdale, John W. Davis, Laura Fisher, Evelyn Pope, Anna E. Rutter, Peter G. Karis.

Sheriff: Charles Manuel, Mari Lynn J. Drew, Herschel G. Wise, Carl H. Nelson.

Road: James I. Umeda, Roland R. Jones, Robert R. Sullivan.

Fire: Lee R. Munger, Claude A. Harrison.

Parks and Recreation: Charles B. Dixon, Joseph Green.

Probation: Lonnie R. Bunkley, Lula Harvey.

Building Services: Willie Mae Grant, Lawrence W. Smith.

Also: La Moyne P. Armstrong, Flood Control; Eloise A. Greenhill, DPSS; Kenneth R. Griffin, Olive View; Carl E. Landreth, Flood Control; Kenneth W. Morgan, Rancho Los Amigos; Louise H. Reynolds, Public Library; James Ural Gossett, District Attorney; Alma C. Corn, Health Services; Genevieve Rincon, Control Ambulance; Frederick E. Topel, Assessor; Samuel Bishop, MLK Hospital; Clarence M. Brown, LAC/USC Med Center; Emma D. Ford, Adoptions; Morton J. Golden, Art Museum; Dorothy Lord, Public Health Program.

