



San Bernardino County

Ensen Mason CPA, CFA • Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector

DOLLARS & SENSE

ATC Quarterly Newsletter

Fourth Quarter, 2021

October - November - December

Divisions of Excellence...by Ensen Mason

While all our employees are important and vital to our mission, I have come to realize that our Division Chiefs have a special kind of responsibility. I have described our divisions as their own little companies with the Chiefs as the CEOs. It makes sense to me that way because they each accept full responsibility for what happens in their division and they make sure the mission of the division is met. Each division is unique in its mission, its roles and responsibilities, and its culture. That's why I take special interest in who our next chiefs will be and put a lot of effort into the interview and vetting process. It's a special honor for me to welcome each new Chief into their new role.

I have had that honor now three times, first with IT Division Chief Don Le, and most recently with Disbursements Division Chief Rhawnie Berg and Tax Collector Division Chief Linda Mikulski. Both Rhawnie and Linda have been tasked with hitting the ground running as both divisions have seasonality, and for better or for worse, they're coming in at or near the height of their busy season.

Please join me in welcoming our new Chiefs and wishing them the best in the years to come.

- Ensen



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ATC is Safe and Sound—Great ShakeOut Drill Completed and CPR/AED Certified!

Great ShakeOut Drill

On October 21, 2021, the ATC Department successfully participated in the annual Great ShakeOut Drill. All ATC employees exercised the traditional drop, cover, and hold on for three minutes before evacuating out to the parking lot. After all employees were determined to be out of the building safe, the drill concluded and employees were released back to the building.



Employees evacuate to the parking lot.



Brand new backpacks

One way that ATC prepares for earthquakes is by providing each employee with an emergency backpack filled with emergency essentials that is kept at their desk. Employees take their backpacks with them when evacuating out of the building for a drill or emergency. This year, ATC bought brand new backpacks chock full of new safety gear and supplies to replace their expiring old backpacks.

FIRST AID, CPR, and AED Training

In October, ATC implemented a new Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training program. Thirty ATC and Assessor-Recorder-Clerk employees received six hours of training on first aid, CPR, and AED machines. ATC Mason scheduled this training after asking who knew how to operate the AED machine near his fourth floor office and hearing crickets. He personally participated in the training as did both of his Assistant ATCs. Each participant who completed the three-part training received a certificate attesting to their accomplishment.

Click here to watch the training video: <https://youtu.be/dAeyEbjhUll>

ATC PROUD TO HOST SUPERVISOR PAUL COOK

ATC Ensen Mason was delighted to welcome First District Supervisor Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), and staff for a tour of the ATC building and its operations on November 3, 2021. The tour commenced on the fourth floor with a look at Executive Management and the Administration Section followed by the Controller, Property Tax, Disbursements, and Internal Audits Divisions. The tour continued on the second floor with the Central Collections and SAP Center of Excellence Divisions, and concluded on the first floor with the Tax Collector, Information Technology, and Treasurer Divisions. Col. Cook and his staff were personally greeted by each Division Chief and provided with a synopsis of the functions and services of each division.



ATC Mason welcomes Col. Cook to his office.



Information Technology Chief Don Le presents ATC Property Tax Legacy Systems Replacement Project highlights to an impressed Col. Cook.

Col. Cook took a very active approach to the tour and made quite an impression. He stopped to meet many staff, engage in conversation, and share his military and legislative experiences. He especially enjoyed meeting retired Marine Corps Captain and Chief Deputy of Disbursements, Michael Alexander, and exchanged some of their military memories. Col. Cook was very appreciative of the time and effort ATC Mason and the Division Chiefs put forth to prepare for and provide a first class look at ATC operations. The tour was a great way to showcase the ATC Department as the enterprise financial foundation of San Bernardino County government. ATC employees appreciated the personal attention from a County Supervisor.



Col. Cook admires the organizational skills of Property Tax Chief Linda Santillano in her creatively arranged corner office at ATC.



Disbursements Chief and retired Marine Corps Captain Mike Alexander demonstrates to Supervisor and retired Marine Corps Colonel Paul Cook that all his ducks are in a row at his office.

Col. Cook served with distinction in the United States Marine Corps for 26 years. He retired from the Marine Corps in 1992 as a full Colonel. From 2006 to 2012 Colonel Cook, along with Supervisor Curt Hagman (who served from 2008 to 2014), both served in the California State Legislature representing the 65th and 55th Assembly Districts, respectively. Col. Cook was elected to serve in the United States House of Representatives from 2012 to 2020, representing California's 8th Congressional District, which includes the High Desert and Mountain communities of San Bernardino County as well as Mono and Inyo counties.

He was joined on the ATC tour by his Chief of Staff Tim Itnyre, Deputy Chief of Staff Dakota Higgins, and Policy Aides Alexa Flores and Julia Robles.

PROPERTY TAX LEGACY SYSTEMS REPLACEMENT PROJECT MOVES FORWARD



Since our last update, the Property Tax Legacy Systems Replacement (PTLSR) Project continued on schedule through Request for Proposal (RFP) and vendor selection processes.

The RFP was released on June 22, 2021, and followed by a Pre-Proposal Conference in the Board of Supervisors' Covington Chambers. ATC Ensen Mason, Asst. ATC Doug Boyd, and Division Chiefs Linda Santillano, Diana Atkeson, and Don Le sat on the dais, outlined the ATC vision, and then fielded questions from over 20 vendors. ATC Mason's presence and advice to the vendors highlighted the importance of the PTLSR and the RFP.



ATC Mason leads the discussion at the Proposers Pre-Conference Meeting located at the Board of Supervisors Chamber.

ATC received six proposals which were scored by an Evaluation Panel of 13 comprised of 1 County Administrative Office Deputy Executive Officer, 3 ATC Division Chiefs, and 9 Managers and Staff from the Property Tax Division, Tax Collector Division, Information Technology Division, and Purchasing Department. Many more staff worked on preparing the RFP, and the panel members were selected based on subject matter expertise and ability to interrelate complex tax systems digitally.

A comprehensive and complex scoring model was developed and then configured into the new Purchasing Department cloud-based proposal evaluation management software, Bonfire. Bonfire's ease of use by the Evaluator and the management of the scoring process were a success, representing an improvement over the decentralized worksheet-based evaluation model.

Three Proposers were selected to provide full demonstrations to the Evaluation Panel. Demonstrations were conducted during a three-day period for each proposer. After three weeks of intense concentration and scoring in September and October, the Evaluation Panel efforts yielded the ranking of Proposers. ATC in collaboration with Purchasing, County Counsel, and the County Administrative Office then began contract negotiations with the top scorer, Grant Street Group. We anticipate a contract being ready for Board of Supervisors approval in Spring 2022.

Fun Fact

By

Ensen Mason

My son expressed an interest in learning to Scuba Dive. I have been a diver since the 90s and have made it to the level of "Rescue Diver". But in looking at my logbook, my last dive was in 2008. So I decided to go through the basic open water course with Travis – for a third time. I am certified by the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) and the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). The good news is the basic underwater and equipment skills seem intact. The bad news is maybe I'm not the same guy I was in 2008 when I was running marathons. I'm doing the next four dives in Lake Perris and La Jolla, which can be challenging, so we will see how I do. Stay tuned...



- Ensen

WHAT'S YOUR STORY, FEATURING LINDA SANTILLANO

The ATC Department Diversity Committee (DDC) had the opportunity to hear from our own Linda Santillano, Chief Deputy of the Property Tax Division. Linda's story originated with her family's strong roots in Moyahua, Zacatecas, Mexico; the rich culture, strong religious influences, love of music, family and food. Her family immigrated to San Marcos, CA in 1972 where she grew up before moving with her family to the Riverside County desert. It wasn't until second grade that she learned to speak English, and she is now a master of spoken and especially written English, as she has to explain highly complex and technical processes and procedures in terms understandable to laymen.

As is customary of her culture, she brought gifts and an array of tamales and Mexican treats to share with those in attendance. She made sure everyone was paying attention by springing a pop quiz on attendees after her presentation.



Property Tax Division Chief Linda Santillano gives interactive audio-visual demonstration to ATC staff.



Attendees had to answer a test question correctly if they wanted to win one of four mini pinatas pictured to the left! Everyone enjoyed the well-attended event, especially the goodies, and they all passed Linda's test.

ATC Employees of the Month (EOM) For September, October, November, December 2021

All of these outstanding employees were gifted with an ATC Mason departmental polo shirt, parking in the special EOM parking spot next to the building, their photo placed on the wall located on the first floor near the employees' entrance, a \$50 gift card from ATC Mason's personal funds or lunch with him at a local restaurant, and of course, bragging rights as ATC Employee of the Month.

Ashley Guzman, September 2021, Employee of the Month

Ashley started with the County in May 2007 as a Public Service Employee with the Sheriff's Department. She joined ATC in November 2011 as an Office Assistant III in Administration and quickly promoted to a Secretary I working for Internal Audits, Disbursements, Controller, and Tax Collector divisions. Ashley excelled and surpassed all expectations and promoted in September 2016 to an Executive Secretary III in Administration.



Ashley is the go-to proofreader and editor for executive management and most of the nine ATC divisions. Most recently, she proofed and directed the compilation, interpretation, coordination, and development of the final 1,059 page Property Tax Legacy Systems Replacement Project RFP. She is dependable, professional, and provides outstanding customer service. Her work ethic is exemplary! Congratulations Ashley!

Andrea Parra, October 2021, Employee of the Month

Andrea joined the ATC family in December 2008 as an Office Assistant III in Administration and promoted to a Secretary I and then Secretary II for the Controller Division. While her secretarial duties are primarily for the Controller Division, Andrea has provided coverage for Administration and the Auditor, Disbursements, and Property Tax divisions throughout her tenure with ATC.

Andrea performs exceptionally in support of the Controller Division with a variety of administrative functions, utilizing her comprehensive knowledge of County administrative policies and procedures to ensure her success with any task at hand. Andrea is an invaluable member of the team. She takes pride in the product she produces and utilizes her resources to ensure her work product is complete and accurate. Congratulations Andrea!



Laura Villeda, November 2021, Employee of the Month

Laura began her County career 29 years ago in 1992 when she started working for Central Collections as an Automated Systems Technician. In 2002, Laura was promoted to an Automated Systems Analyst I. When Central Collections merged with the Auditor-Controller in 2010, Laura began working in the Information Technology Division. In 2015, she promoted to her current position as an Automated Systems Analyst II.



Laura manages the day-to-day requests for Central Collections and coordinates data and information exchanges with several internal and external agencies. She does an excellent job ensuring division needs are met while work is performed within CUBS, a 30-year-old application. She manages this aging and fragile system that hosts several components critical to Central Collections operations, despite losing major support from the supplier.

Laura prides herself in her work, customer service, and positive attitude. Congratulations Laura!

Gale Bowen, December 2021, Employee of the Month

Gale joined the Tax Collector Division in August 2013 as an Office Assistant II. She quickly promoted to Office Assistant II and has worked in both the Tax Collection and Tax Accounting Sections.

Gale is a seasoned cashier with a near perfect accuracy rate, which is not easy considering she personally collected more than \$10 million in cash over the last three fiscal years. Gale demonstrates a strong work ethic and takes great pride in her work. She arrives early to prepare the unit for the workday by opening the safe and prepping her cash drawer. She is also one of the last employees to leave at the end of the day. Her dedication to the department and her job are admirable.



Congratulations Gale!

RETIREMENT CELEBRATIONS

December 2021 brings the retirement of two highly valued members of the ATC team.



Mike enjoys his moment.

Mike Alexander, ATC's Chief Deputy of Disbursements, is retiring after serving San Bernardino County for just over 10 years following a successful career serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as roles at Riverside County. Mike has stated that his favorite jobs of his entire career include both of his roles here at ATC. Mike has been the Disbursements Division Chief for over four years and was also ATC's Central Payroll Manager for over four years.

Mike will begin his retirement with a series of trips towing his fifth wheel to many destinations across the country where we hope that he will thoroughly enjoy all the wonders and beauties he discovers with his kayak in the water and his bike out on America's scenic byways.



Mike and Anita cut the cake.

Anita Valdez has served the County faithfully as part of ATC's Central Payroll team for over 15 years. After joining the County in 2006 as a PSE, her career has included accomplishments such as being recognized in April 2020 as ATC's Employee of the Month, participating in the implementation of the ePayroll Dropbox project which also earned the County a NACo award, and being an amazing contributor to the Department's Employee Committee for many years.

Mike and Anita will be sorely missed. We wish them both many years of happiness and relaxation in retirement. Their contributions to ATC will be felt for many years to come.

ATC WELCOMES TWO NEW DIVISION CHIEFS!

Rhawnie Berg has been selected as the new Chief Deputy of the Disbursements Division. She replaces the retiring Mike Alexander. Rhawnie began her career with the County in 2005, when she joined the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector as an Accountant I in the Internal Audits Section. She promoted quickly, first to Accountant II and shortly thereafter to Internal Auditor III. In 2011, Rhawnie was promoted to the position of Supervising Accountant II, where she spent time working for both the Accounts Payable and Central Payroll Sections.

In September 2013, Rhawnie was promoted to Supervising Accountant III in the Property Tax Section, and in July 2014, Rhawnie transferred to Internal Audits as a Supervising Internal Auditor III. She has been the Accounts Payable Manager since 2015. She was also recently selected as the July 2021 ATC Employee of the Month.

Rhawnie received her Baccalaureate of Science in Accounting from California State University, San Bernardino. She obtained an Accredited Payables Manager certification from the Institute of Finance and Management in 2017. She brings her expertise, management skills, and exceptional customer service to her new role.

When off duty, Rhawnie enjoys gardening and watching her children play several sports activities.

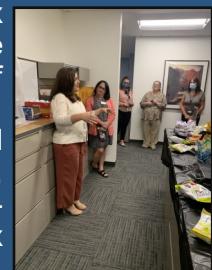
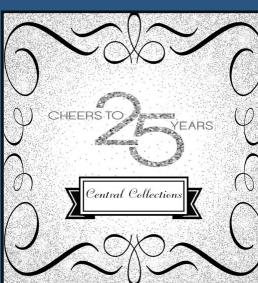
Linda Mikulski has been selected as the new Chief Deputy Tax Collector effective November 22, 2021. She replaces Diana Atkeson, who was promoted in October to Deputy Executive Officer at the Government Center. Linda joined the County in November 2019 as ATC Manager in Central Collections overseeing the Accounting and Cashiering support units, collectively known as Operations.

Linda is a hands-on manager who streamlines processes as she identifies opportunities. She successfully adapted processes that had been in place for many years to more modern methods. She continually sought to align the work product of her units with the needs of Central Collections' major clients, Courts and ARMC. Linda is a master of data analytics and developed useful tools to foster increased understanding of Central Collections operation. She was selected as the May 2021 ATC Employee of the Month based on those skills.

Linda is a California-licensed CPA with over 18 years of professional experience in accounting, auditing, and management. Linda loves the outdoors and travel. Most recently, she visited Ireland and Iceland, and has a list of travel destinations that she is eager to go to.

Central Collections Turns 25, Styles A New Name

In 1996, on order of the Board of Supervisors, Ordinance 3662 was adopted forming the Office of Central Collections. This office consolidated the functions of Medical Center Collections and Probation Accounting, along with the Unsecured Property Tax Collection function of the Tax Collector. Upon consolidating the Auditor/Controller-Recorder (ACR) and the Treasurer-Tax Collector (TTX) in 2010, Central Collections became a division of the Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector. The Division boasts a staff of 61 and is comprised of six distinct high-volume collection units, each staffed and supervised by experienced collectors, plus two fiscal units providing cashiering, operational and accounting support. Collection services are provided to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, San Bernardino County Superior Court, Tax Collector and other County departments needing assistance with collecting delinquent accounts receivable.



Central Collections Division Chief Sonia Hermosillo celebrated her staff on this special anniversary.

ATC Mason personally highlighted the Birthday Party thrown by Division Chief Sonia Hermosillo and her employees on September 15, 2021. He commended them on a job well done in the past, and commented on how we are refining and improving our procedures to ensure future success. ATC Mason is modernizing the name of the division to better focus on its mission, while being more sensitive and responsive to the needs of our customers. Approval of the name change to Revenue Recovery Division by the Board of Supervisors is scheduled during December, with the name change effective in January 2022.



Central Collections staff enjoying the festivities.

The Division is proud to serve the County and its client departments!