To: Warden and Members of County Council  
From: Director of Human Resources

Employee Recognition Awards Program  
(General Policy Manual)

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council approve and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to sign and enact the policy changes attached entitled ‘Employee Recognition Awards Program’ for amendment in the General Policy Manual.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Presents the Senior Management Team’s proposed changes to the previously titled ‘Service Recognition Program’ policy contained in the General Policy Manual.

- The changes to this policy are in response to the results of the employee engagement survey undertaken earlier this year. Recognition, both informal and formal, was highlighted as a primary opportunity for action.

- The policy proposes changes to our current long service awards, and introduces a new element of formal staff recognition – Oxford County Awards of Excellence – which are based on outstanding achievement in the demonstration of our corporate values.

Implementation Points

Upon approval of this policy, staff will implement the revised recognition program and ensure staff is both aware of the new program and its nomination process.

Financial Impact

The recommendation contained in this report has no financial impact. The changes to the long service awards and the introduction of the awards of excellence will all be accomplished within the current funds annually budgeted for the awards program. The Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Risks/Implications

Should Council not adopt this report, our formal recognition program will remain status quo. This would lead to decreased staff confidence that the County would act on results of the employee engagement survey.
Strategic Plan

County Council adopted the County of Oxford Strategic Plan at its regular meeting held March 27, 2013. The initiative contained within this report supports the Values and Strategic Directions as set out in the Strategic Plan as it pertains to the following Strategic Directions:

6. i. A County that is an Employer of Choice - Attract, retain and develop the highest quality staff through:
   - Management and organizational excellence
   - Open communications, dialogue and understanding
   - Vibrant and challenging career opportunities
   Progressive policies that:
   - Value and engage staff
   - Provide vibrant careers and quality development opportunities
   - Ensure accountability
   - Encourage creativity, innovation and problem solving
   - Actively promote employee health, safety and wellness
   - Provide fair and competitive compensation
   - Recognize performance and achievement

DISCUSSION

Background

It is a best practice for organizations to have both formal and informal ways of recognizing the contributions of employees. One outcome of the 2014 Employee Engagement Survey was the emergence of informal and formal staff recognition as a primary opportunity for improvement within our organization. Subsequent to the survey, a commitment was made to review ways to enhance our current recognition program.

Comments

Building a culture of recognition in an organization, involves implementing both formal and informal recognition programs. A staff team has been working diligently in creating an overall recognition program, including tools for staff to informally (on a day to day basis) recognize the achievements and efforts of one another. In addition, the formal recognition element is being refreshed through the proposed changes to our current policy (Attachment 1).

One of the key proposed changes to the policy is amending the long service awards to 10 year increments from the current 5 year increments. With that change, it is proposed to increase the dollar value of the award gift, and introduce gift cards as the primary gift available for staff to choose from.

Notwithstanding the importance of celebrating the long service of our staff, the proposed addition of the Awards of Excellence is a key addition to our formal recognition program. The Awards of Excellence is proposed as a program to recognize accomplishment in a manner that
demonstrates and reinforces our corporate values (Excellence; Accountability; Innovation; Integrity and Teamwork) and Customer Service.

It is proposed that these awards will be selected through a nomination process and will celebrate an individual, team, or department who display excellence in the demonstration of one of our corporate values.

Traditionally the long service awards have taken place at County Council in May of each year. With the revised program, it is also proposed to hold a special staff recognition event outside of the formal setting of a County Council meeting. This would allow additional time to celebrate the staff receiving a long service award and an award of excellence.

Conclusions

The proposed changes to this policy are an important enhancement to the County’s formal recognition program. These changes will lead to increased levels of employee engagement, and contribute to our ability to attract, retain, and develop the highest quality staff.

SIGNATURE

Departmental Approval:

Original signed by

_________________________________________
Amy Smith
Director of Human Resources

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

_________________________________________
Peter M. Crockett, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Employee Recognition Awards Program Policy
Service Employee Recognition Awards Program

The County of Oxford recognizes that employees play a key role in the achievement of the organization's mission, vision, and strategic directions. Employees are recognized formally for their contributions through a Long Service Awards program, and an Awards of Excellence program.

Employees will be acknowledged for their years of service, and will be presented with an award personally chosen by the employee, from a variety of items offered according to years of service and the following price ranges:

- 10 years of service: award selection priced up to $50
- 15 years of service: award selection priced up to $75
- 20 years of service: award selection priced up to $100
- 25 years of service: award selection priced up to $200
- 30 years of service: award selection priced up to $225
- 35 years of service: award selection priced up to $250
- 40 years of service: award selection priced up to $300
- 45 years of service: award selection priced up to $350

DEFINITION

“Transferred Employee” refers to an Employee who has joined the County as a result of a “sale of business” as defined by the Labour Relations Act and Employment Standards Act.

PROCEDURE

1.0 Long Service Awards:

1.1 Service awards will be calculated from date of hire up to and including December 31st of the previous year. Broken Service (prior employment with the County of Oxford) will not be included in the calculation of service.

1.2 All County of Oxford employees from all departments will be included regardless of employment status (Part-time, Full-time, Transferred Employees, etc.).

1.3 Any approved periods of absence from work such as Pregnancy, Parental, and Sick leaves will be included in the calculation of years of service.

1.4 Long Service Awards will be presented at County Council a recognition
ceremony in the spring of each year for service obtained as of December 31 of the preceding year. The awards will be presented by the Warden/Deputy Warden, CAO, and Department Director. For those employees who don't attend the County Council meeting recognition ceremony, awards will be presented by the Department Head Director or designate.

1.5 For transferred employees, continuous service from the date of hire with their predecessor employer is included in the calculation of their years of service.

1.6 Employees will be acknowledged for their years of service and will be presented with a gift according to their length of service. Employees are recognized for their service at 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of service, and are provided with a gift card of their choice from a list of available options, and an Oxford County pin. The dollar value of the gift cards are as follows: $100 (10 years of service), $200 (20 years of service), $300 (30 years of service) and $400 (40 years of service). In accordance with CRA regulations, the gift card is a taxable benefit.

2.0 Oxford County Awards of Excellence

2.1 Oxford County Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding achievement in the demonstration of our corporate values. Awards, in which there is a suitable recipient, will be presented to an individual, department, or team for demonstration of outstanding achievement in each of the following areas:

Customer Service
Leadership
Accountability
Innovation
Integrity
Teamwork

2.2 Award recipients will be chosen based on peer and/or supervisor nomination, using the approved nomination form (Form 5.16A). The completed nomination forms are due no later than December 31 of each year to the CAO’s Office.

2.3 No later than January 15 of each year, a staff team will be established to evaluate the prior year nominations and recommend award recipients to the CAO no later than February 28. The CAO will make the final decision regarding the recipients of each award.
2.4 The Awards of Excellence are presented at a recognition ceremony in the spring of each year. The awards will be presented by the Warden/Deputy Warden and CAO.
Oxford County Awards of Excellence
Recognizing Outstanding Achievement in the Demonstration of our Corporate Values

Nomination Form

The Oxford County Corporate Values–Awards of Excellence are granted to employees, departments, or teams who, by their contributions and achievements, most exemplify the attributes of the award category.

I would like to nominate:

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<th>Nominee (Employee/Department/Team) Name:</th>
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<td>Department (if individual):</td>
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<td>Position (if individual):</td>
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<td>E-mail address:</td>
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<td>Phone number:</td>
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<td>Relationship to nominee:</td>
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My contact information

<table>
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<th>Employee Name:</th>
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<td>Department:</td>
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<td>Phone number:</td>
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Signature

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<tr>
<th>Nominator Signature:</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
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Award categories

Please indicate for which award you are nominating the employee/department/team for (only choose one):

☐ Customer Service: An employee/department/team that displays excellence in internal and/or external customer service, consistently going above and beyond for the internal and/or external customer.

☐ Leadership: An employee/department/team that demonstrates exceptional organizational and/or individual leadership through valued contributions on a departmental and/or corporate project, or within a community volunteer capacity.

☐ Accountability: An employee/department/team that accepts responsibility at all times. He/she/they are not afraid to admit missteps and consistently resolve issues in an efficient and effective manner.

☐ Innovation: An employee/department/team that is consistently solutions-focused and is forward thinking in everyday work and/or larger projects. He/she/they are committed to continuous improvement departmentally and/or corporately.

☐ Integrity: An employee/department/team that operates to the highest ethical standards and is consistently open, honest, and fair.

☐ Teamwork: An employee/department/team that listens to and values the ideas of others. He/she/they have a demonstrated commitment to coordination, open communication, and knowledge transfer.

Nomination Information

All nominations must include a thorough completion of the questions below. Based on the specific award criteria as outlined above, the nomination should include the specific accomplishment(s) or examples of demonstrated values which highlight why the nominee(s) deserve to be the award recipient.

Please include specific, detailed examples and dates to support your nomination, as well as up to three letters of support (each letter should be a maximum of 1 page).

The information provided will be used by the selection committee to make a recommendation to the CAO regarding the recipient(s) of each award.
Describe how the nominee(s) actions/behaviours demonstrate the value selected in their day-to-day work. Please include specific, detailed examples and dates.

How have the nominee(s) actions/behaviours impacted the organization, colleagues, citizens/customers and/or community partners?

What are the nominee(s) unique qualities and/or achievements?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Additional information**

- Only Oxford County employees may nominate other Oxford County employees, departments, or teams.
- The nominee is not required to sign off on the nomination form.
- Supplemental materials attached to the nomination form will not be considered (with the exception of any letters of support).
- Please answer the above questions in a total of 2 pages or less.

Please submit this completed form to the CAO’s Office no later than December 31, 2014 to csenior@oxfordcounty.ca.