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Kelly Mearns has had a lot on her plate in 2015, and she has handled it with professionalism and a positive attitude. The executive assistant for the City Manager's Office took on two major projects, in addition to all of her regular duties. That successful juggling earned her the City of Burleson Employee of the Quarter honors for the fourth quarter of 2015.

"I was very surprised," Mearns said of learning of the honor.

Her peers were not. Mearns was part of a two-person team that took on the project of redesigning the City's website. That project started in the fall of 2014 - nonstop with training, design, and content management - until the website redesign reveal in July 2015. Since then the team has been putting the finishing touches on what will be the City's first mobile app.

While she was working on the CivicPlus website redesign project, the award winner was doing double duty spearheading a new software program, Agenda Quick, for creating agendas for City Council, Planning and Zoning, and City boards/committees. That project also involved training City directors and managers and working with the vendor to work out issues along the way.

Mearns had no background in website programs or design when she was hired by the City, almost 19 years ago, in January 1997.

"The only background I have in it is what I've learned on the job," Mearns said. "I started updating the original City website using FrontPage, and then we switched to Dreamweaver when Elaine Cherry, the City's web technician, created a new site."

The Burleson native not only juggled two major projects, but she continued with her "regular job" which includes processing citizen requests through the City website's online Request Tracker feature; answering phone calls; processing council agendas; and providing administrative support for the City Manager's Office and Deputy City Attorney Matt Ribitzki.

“Kelly can always be counted on,” according to the nomination. “She can find answers to just about any question, which makes her a standout when it comes to customer service. She is one of those rock steady employees whose work behind the scenes continuously makes the City look good. She is top notch when it comes to efficiency and she thinks like a resident/customer, instead of as an employee, when it comes to troubleshooting a problem.”

Kay Godbey was the city manager when Mearns was hired in 1997 as an administrative secretary. This was Mearns’ first governmental job.

“I’ve lived in Burleson most of my life and felt like this would be a good fit for me,” she said.

In 2001 Mearns was promoted to senior administrative secretary, and in 2006 she was promoted to executive assistant. The award winner has worked under four city managers – Godbey, Bill Davison, Curtis Hawk, and current City Manager Dale Cheatham.

“The City Manager’s Office is fortunate to have Kelly as a member of our team and we believe she is definitely Employee of the Quarter,” according to the nomination.

Thirteen City employees were nominated for the fourth quarter award, which encompassed animal services, city manager’s office, city secretary/records, community development, economic development, engineering/gas well development, finance/support services, human resources, information technology, municipal court, neighborhood services, and permits/inspections. The criterion for Employee of the Quarter focuses on the Burleson Ethics statement: efficiency, transparency, honesty, innovation, and customer service.

The 2015 Employee of the Quarter winners include Burleson Police Department Investigator Larry Sparks, Burleson Senior Activity Center Supervisor Paula Benjamin, and Alton Fore/senior crew leader of the pavement maintenance division of the City’s public works department.