



November 14, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CITY OF GULFPORT PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, AND UTILITY PARTNERS, LLC (GULFPORT PROJECT) BECOME AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION ACCREDITED

GULFPORT, MS - The American Public Works Association (APWA) has officially granted the City of Gulfport Public Works Department, the City of Gulfport Engineering Department, and Utility Partners, LLC (Gulfport Project) accreditation status, designating them the 118th such agency to receive this prestigious accreditation in the United States and Canada. This process includes the completion of a Department Wide Self-Assessment (356 practices), application for Accreditation, a Site Review, and a vote by the APWA Accreditation Council. The APWA is the only International Accreditation Agency for Public Works Departments of cities, counties, and towns.

Accreditation is the mark of professionalism that indicates that a public works and engineering agency adheres to or exceeds standards established by peer agencies across the nation and has made the commitment to continuously improve in the delivery of public works and engineering operations and services in the community it serves. "Gulfport's Public Works and Engineering Departments are highly dedicated to our mission of providing essential and vital services that affect the daily lives of everyone who lives in our City", says Wayne E. Miller, P.E., Director of Public Works.

The City's Public Works Department has a system based on performance criteria, rewards, benchmarks, and measurements for all their work. The Department underwent its Accreditation Site Review in October 2016 and was found to be in Full Compliance. Among our practices, the City of Gulfport Public Works and Engineering Departments Employee Recognition, Comprehensive Multi-Hazard Emergency Plan, Equipment Manufacturer Warranty, and Parts Warranty Tracking were all earmarked as "Model Practices" by the Site Review Team to be presented to other agencies wishing to become accredited.

The APWA will conduct a Site Review every four years; this process ensures that an agency, once accredited, continues to maintain the standards of excellence that allowed it to become accredited.

What is accreditation... According to the American Public Works Association, accreditation is *"The purpose of the accreditation program is to provide a means of formally verifying and recognizing public works agencies for compliance with the recommended practices set forth in the [Public Works Management Practices Manual](#). It is a voluntary, self-motivated approach to objectively evaluate, verify and recognize compliance with the recommended management practices. The objectives of the accreditation program are to:*

- *create impetus for organization self improvement and stimulate general raising of standards*
- *offer a voluntary evaluation and education program rather than government regulated activity*
- *recognize good performance and provide motivation to maintain and improve performance*
- *improve public works performance and the provision of services*
- *increase professionalism*
- *instill pride among agency staff, elected officials and the local community"*