

The PARKING Dream Team

By Kim Jackson, CAPP, and
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A parking monitor who smiles, calls her customers by name, and shows the patience of a saint. A general manager who rebuilt an entire municipal parking

system after a devastating flood, without losing his cool or his hope. A municipal parking and transportation department that embraced technology, sustainable solutions, and customer service to shine. And a seasoned parking professional who's known for his corporate success, tireless energy, and influence on the way the parking industry approaches municipal and institutional business.

It may sound like a parking dream team, but all of those examples are realities, and they're all 2013 IPI Professional Recognition Program winners. Nominated by their peers and selected by a committee of industry professionals, this year's winners exemplify the positive spirit, can-do attitude, and upstanding characteristics the industry sets as goals for its members.

The Professional Recognition Program was created by IPI to acknowledge the staff who operate, maintain, and manage parking operations, and the individuals who are changing the perception of parking as a career and profession. It honors those who exemplify excellence every day and who, through their actions, add "professional" to their job descriptions.

Without further ado, as they say, let's meet this year's Professional Recognition Program award winners.



THE 2013 PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM AWARDS.

Staff Member of the Year

**Christine Eberhart,
University of
Georgia**



“goes above and beyond the call of duty to meet customers’ needs.”

While many students can be intimidated or overwhelmed by a large university such as the University of Georgia, those who know Eberhart say she helps shrink the experience for them through her personal interactions and warm, friendly manner. She’s known for making visitors feel at home, and for brightening the days of faculty, staff, and students on campus.

One staff member recently wrote of Eberhart, “Every time I see her, she greets me with a smile and positive words of encouragement, and this always makes my day. She is willing to work with everyone that she comes in contact with. She is very patient and she always goes the extra mile to make sure that everyone in the deck is served to the best of her ability. I am grateful for her service.”

Beyond helping her customers have good days, Eberhart has also served as an example for her co-workers. Her cheery attitude is infectious and she has raised the level of performance for her entire department, acting as a catalyst that’s resulted in recognition for the department, including its selection as IPI’s 2011 Parking Organization of the Year.

Georgia Tate Parking Deck customers know that no matter how the rest of their day goes, they can always count on a smile from Parking Monitor Christine Eberhart. Known for her cheery disposition and commitment to outstanding customer service, Eberhart calls her customers by name, and recently won the 1,800-employee UGA Finance and Administration department Merit Award for Customer Service, which recognizes someone who

When Jon Rouse arrived in Cedar Rapids as the new general manager of Park Cedar Rapids, the community had just faced a devastating flood: 31.2 feet of flood water covered 10.2 square miles of downtown, leaving behind an estimated \$6 billion to \$9 billion in damage and destroying many major public buildings.

The parking system had lost its offices, most of its 900 on-street meters, one 500-space public ramp, and many of its elevators, HVAC systems, skywalks, electrical systems, and paper documentation. Undaunted, Rouse hunkered down to approach his new job—and all its challenges—with full composure and efficiency. Known for never asking a staff member to do something he wouldn’t do himself, Rouse quickly became known as a manager who puts his people first and always acts with the highest integrity.

Since taking over as general manager, Rouse has overseen the physical rebuilding of the city’s parking system, and implemented demand-based tiered parking pricing, installed credit/debit card-enabled meters, instituted comprehensive spring and fall cleaning of all parking ramps, replaced PARCS systems on all ramps, actively participated in the lease agreement that transferred oversight of the municipal parking system to the Cedar Rapids Downtown District (now the CR



Supervisor of the Year

**Jon Rouse,
Park Cedar
Rapids**

Metro Economic Alliance), installed energy-efficient lighting in two downtown parking ramps to save an average 50 percent per month in utility costs, and hired and trained several new managers and coordinators in his department, among other projects and accomplishments. He is an inspiration to his staff, his clients, and the industry as a whole.

The City of Perth, Australia, has taken the concepts of integrating technology and sustainability to entirely new levels, investing in its facilities to improve customer service and make city parking truly green.

City of Perth Parking (CPP) recently renovated its Goderich Street car park to incorporate state-of-the-art license plate recognition (LPR) technology,

offering a ticketless payment alternative. It also developed a smartphone app that offers a real-time availability feature and tells customers how many parking spaces are available in each garage; the app was awarded the Innovation Award for Excellence by the Parking Association of Australia.

The Elder Street car park—one of the city's newest facilities—showcases environmentally-friendly features including solar panels, rain water harvesting, automatic carbon dioxide (CO2) monitoring, natural ventilation,



Parking Organization of the Year

City of Perth Parking, Department of Transportation Services

efficient lighting, and electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities. Plans are in place to roll out these technologies at all CPP car parks in the future.

Additionally, the city has planted and is maintaining 170,000 trees from fees paid by parking customers. Another 85,000 trees will be planted in 2013 thanks to the initiative, helping reduce atmospheric carbon.

CPP has also introduced solar-powered ticket machines, a website that provides up-to-date information on all of its 33 parking facilities, a unique reconciliation process for parking payments, and technology that accounts for every cent collected, and is active in its community through events such as a Christmas parade and telethon that receives all of CPP's parking income for a weekend.

The City of Perth has embraced its tagline of "The Greener Place to Park," and it shows.



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James M. Hunnicutt, CAPP, Parking Professional of the Year

Roamy R. Valera, CAPP
SP Plus/Standard Parking Corporation

In 2012, the IPI Board of Directors voted to re-name the long-standing Parking Professional of the Year recognition in honor of James M. Hunnicutt, CAPP, who passed away in 2012. Hunnicutt was a founding member of IPI and a pioneer in the parking and transportation field who made significant contributions to the profession throughout his life, and was himself selected as Parking Man of the Year in 1976.

The first recipient of this award is Roamy R. Valera, CAPP, who is well-known as a leading industry advocate for the professional management of municipal and institutional on- and off-street parking operations. With more than 24 years of industry experience, he's developed a reputation as an active industry association and trade group member and advocate for public relations, customer service policies, and employee training.

Valera has participated on many IPI committees, the Advisory Council, and numerous work projects, and has developed an expertise considered indispensable by his industry peers. His many industry presentations advocate that training programs and related initiatives always focus on the daily realities of the job, and not the textbook de-

scriptions of them. Training for frontline employees should target the communications process, he says. "If we train them to understand how communications work, we will train them to be successful under any scenario that they face on a daily basis," he has said.



He's also devoted considerable attention to parking facility issues. In seminars and presentations, he sets out concrete steps to address the common occurrences of vehicles making blind turns, customers walking in drive aisles and exiting into active sidewalks, tripping hazards, blind/dark areas such as stairwells and elevator

lobbies, and criminal activities on parking properties. In addition, he is involved with several community and charitable programs.

He directs both the municipal and institutional services divisions for Standard Parking Corporation, and has successfully expanded the company's operational base of municipal clients to several U.S. cities. He has had significant influence on the way the industry approaches municipal and institutional parking, and his actions personify how and why *Parking Matters*®.



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