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## **Butterflies in the Tax Office**

When I ran for County Tax Assessor Collector, I promised to improve service, reduce cost and fight for property tax relief. I arrived January 3, 2005, to discover a backlog of tax payments (that took four months to post) and motor vehicle registration renewals (that took six weeks to process). With all hands on deck, we got to work and began a culture of change.

The change began with a job fair in December 2004 at which everyone was interviewed, surveyed and handed a policy that applied to all. It included a dress code, the 10 Commandments of Customer Service and employee buy in. The motto, "where the race for quality has no finish line" was adopted to communicate a quest for excellence.

The transformation has been incredible and on-going. Although 1,000 things have changed and there are more to come, the most significant was our attitudes. We will not be average (the best of the worst and worst of the best). We will be accountable – to our customers and to one another. Our mission "to provide exemplary service in a cost efficient manner to all customers" requires effort.

The most important job of leadership is to be the role model for performance and attitude while being the cheerleader and supplying the necessary tools to insure success. I have three amazing chief deputies helping me with that and we have found that laughter is sometimes the ONLY medicine when it comes to changing a county tax office. Although change can be painful, without it we would not have butterflies.

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This is the second in a series of articles celebrating 10 years of change in the Galveston County Tax Office.