

ZAPATA CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT

Public Relations Plan

11/26/2012



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Introduction

This plan is based on the IAAO Standard on Public Relations, and is to be used in conjunction with that standard to fit the needs of Zapata Central Appraisal District.

Zapata Central Appraisal District Mission Statement

The mission of the Zapata County Appraisal District is to discover, list, and value all properties in the jurisdiction at a legally correct level of value, achieving as much equity and as little variation as is possible with the staff and resources available.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide a written document to serve the purposes of the public relations program of Zapata Central Appraisal District. serves Zapata County, Texas and aims to provide the public with an open line of communication to increase public knowledge and CAD transparency.

Goals

One of the goals of this document is to provide the CAD with policies to remember when dealing with the public, and a measuring mechanism to ensure that the CAD's Public Relations program is being implemented in the intended fashion.

Another goal of the document as well as the Public Relations program of the CAD is to increase transparency and availability of information, thereby increasing taxpayer confidence in the CAD. It is the CAD's goal that all communications with the public are informative, clear, accurate, and consistent.

Definition of Customer

The Zapata Central Appraisal District has multiple sets of customers with different needs. Many people find at one time or another that they need to contact the Zapata Central Appraisal District for a variety of reasons, and the CAD's PR plan is designed to accommodate the needs of them all. Below are some examples of CAD customers.

- Property Owners/Taxpayers
- Population of Kenedy County
- Taxing Entities
- Other Appraisal Districts
- The Property Tax Assistance Division and the State of Texas
- Property Tax Consultants
- Real Estate and Oil and Gas Lawyers, Land Men

Public Inquiries

CAD Staff are to be courteous to taxpayers and all members of the public at all times, and answer inquiries with the utmost respect and accuracy.

Periodic Policy Evaluation

Periodically the Chief Appraiser and other staff will review the current public relations and customer service policies and actions to determine the level of sufficiency. This may occur bi-annually, annually, immediately following any type of incident that might induce public fallout, and when any key staff member leaves the CAD.

The review should include a time when CAD staff will have a chance to add feedback and voice their concerns and suggestions. After the review is complete, the designated person will compile the suggestions into new policies to be implemented by all CAD staff.

Timely Response

It is the policy of Zapata Central Appraisal District to respond as quickly as possible to public inquiries. Telephone calls and e-mails should be returned as promptly as feasible for each staff member. It is imperative that each staff member read e-mails and listen to phone messages and respond professionally and timely. It is unacceptable for telephone calls and e-mails to go unanswered for more than 2 business days. We all get busy, but as public servants it is our duty to be responsive to public inquiries. Not only is it a good policy, but it will help the CAD to increase goodwill and confidence in the Property Tax System and local government.

Media Communications and Crisis Response

The Zapata Central Appraisal District will respond to all media inquiries, even if “no comment” is the only response. It is the policy of the CAD not to comment on sensational stories lacking concrete factual information that is relevant to the CAD and to taxpayers. The CAD will have several prepared statements to address the following crisis events to prevent CAD unpreparedness and absence of someone to make a statement:

- a. [Common natural disasters that may affect the area (e.g. wildfire, hurricane, drought)
- b. Sudden, unexpected departure of the Chief Appraiser or Board Member
- c. Expected departure of the Chief Appraiser
- d. Tax rate increase
- e. Rendition request/filing deadline
- f. Tax Bills due]

Newspaper

Newspaper submissions will be sent in at various times of year by the CAD to inform taxpayers of impending filing deadlines and other information. The CAD will submit a notice

that rendition filings are due between January 1 – February 28. Examples of past filings will be on file.

Television

If television appearance requests are made, it is up to CAD discretion whether to accept the request depending upon the nature of the news item. As previously stated, it is the policy of the CAD to refrain from comment on stories of a sensational or negative nature. The CAD may find it in the best interests of CAD public relations to speak to television media if the story will be informative and educational. All statements will be fact-based and opinions and speculation are to be excluded from media communications.

Courtesy Information

Mail Outs

The CAD may mail out public information documents at certain times of year to remind taxpayers of their duties, rights, and remedies. These mail outs will be proofed to ensure error-free and accurate communications.

Courthouse Postings

Zapata Central Appraisal District will post announcements for CAD Board of Director Meetings 72 hours prior to the meeting. The agenda will also be posted. Procedure for posting agendas can be found in the Board of Directors Manual, Page 10, section 1.3.5

Available Flyers

The CAD will make available in its office and the county tax office [IF APPLICABLE] various flyers for taxpayers to take and to bring to public events. These flyers will contain relevant information for taxpayers about the CAD, the Board of Directors, and the appraisal process.

Public Appearances

The Chief Appraiser will make 1-2 public appearances per year at county functions such as county commissioner meetings, city council meetings and school board meetings. The Chief Appraiser may also make appearances at meetings of local organizations such as the [Lion's Club or Rotary Club] to discuss taxpayer and county finance issues. Public appearances are a way for taxpayers, taxing entities, and the county population to get to know the Chief Appraiser and become familiar and comfortable with the property taxation process. At each public appearance where a speech is made by the Chief Appraiser it would be ideal to have a question and answer session following the speech to give the public a chance to respond.

Taxing Entity Communications

In addition to attending taxing entity meetings periodically, it is recommended that the Chief Appraiser periodically check in with the CAD contact at Taxing Entities to ensure open communication and accessibility. A phone call, e-mail, or brief meeting would suffice.

Public Feedback Mechanisms

In addition to routine inquiries and opportunities for taxpayers to contact the CAD, the CAD will provide confidential comment cards that the taxpayers may fill out to provide feedback to the CAD. The categories on these mechanisms will include timeliness of CAD response to inquiries, satisfaction of issue resolution.

Calendar of events

January	Advertisement: Notice of Electronic Communication
February	Public Service Announcement: Personal Property Rendition- Mail-out
March	Advertisement: Remember to render & filing assistance dates
March	Meeting: Tax Assessor/Collector & Chief Appraiser
April	Advertisement: State's General Property Appraisal Information.
April	Public Service announcement: Appraisal Notice (25.19) Mail-out Notification
April	Mail out Appraisal Notices
April	Rendition Deadline Reminder
April	Deliver preliminary certified estimated values to taxing entity. (ZC, ZISD,ZW,SSW)
May	ARB Protest procedures
June	ARB protest deadline

July	Certify Appraisal Roll to taxing entity
July	Meet with Tax Assesor/Collector.