

# The INSIDE

# LANE

SPECIAL EDITION



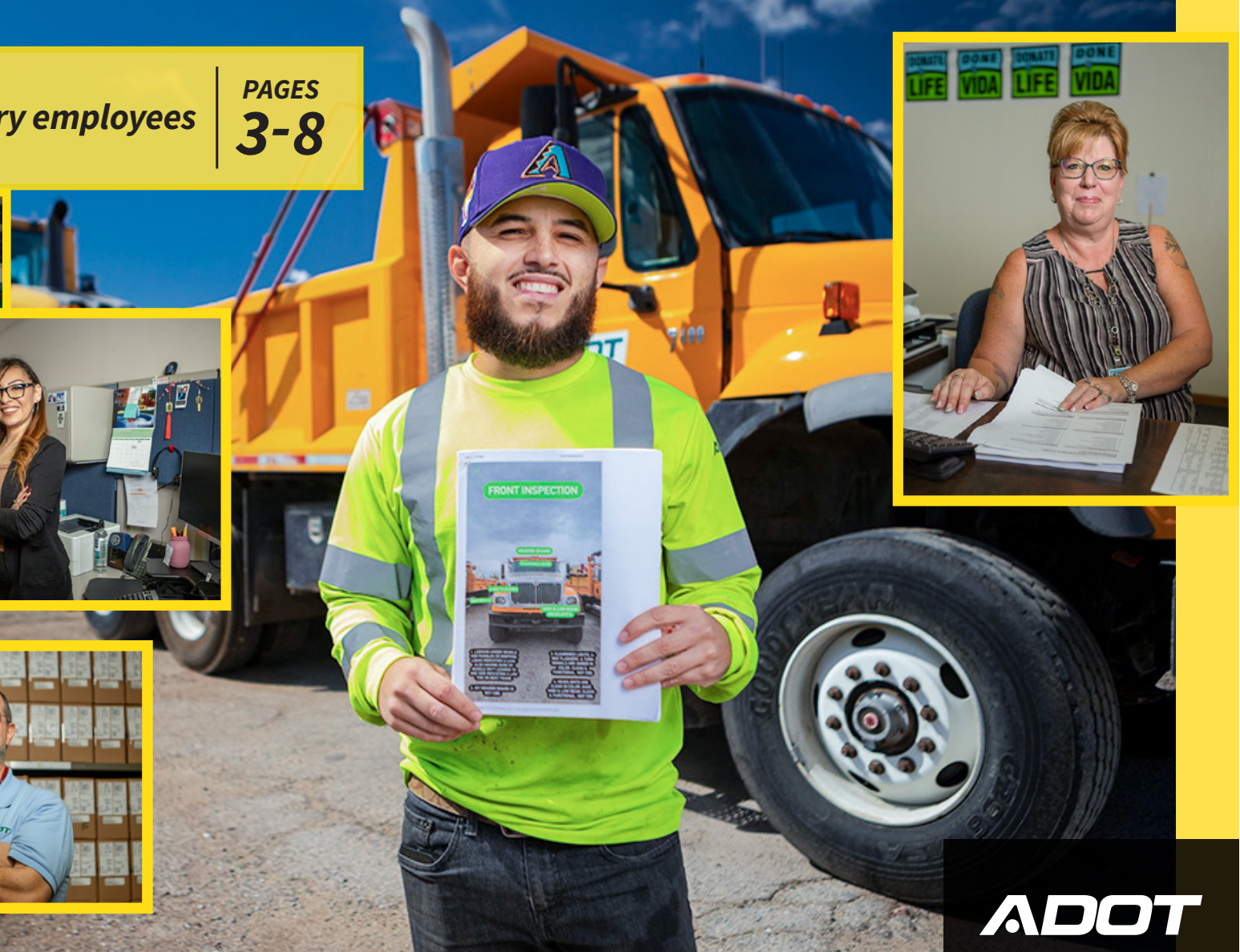
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*A newsletter for employees of the Arizona Department of Transportation*

**Honoring extraordinary employees**

PAGES  
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**ADOT**

**M**Y ADOT CAREER started in 2006 at the Phoenix Construction District as a construction field inspector. I joined the Information Technology Group, where for the last 10 years I've moved into several different roles before being promoted within the ITG leadership team. Today, I am responsible for managing our application, geospatial and database development, and maintaining our server and network infrastructure across the state, along with ADOT's cloud assets. I assist my leadership in executing our IT strategic plan, defining our technology roadmap and aligning it to meet our customers' needs. When I'm not working, I enjoy time with my young children and my wife, and I cheer on the Red Bull Formula 1 team during Grand Prix race weekends.

### How do you take care of yourself so you can take care of your team?

IT is naturally stressful work and the needs of our customers vary greatly due to the disparate nature of each division. In order to make sure my teams have the support they need, it's important that I take the time needed for self-care. I have two specific activities I do throughout the day that help me support my team. These activities consist of 1) practice breathing exercises to de-stress and keep focused on what matters and 2) reflecting midway through each day on the successes we've had to avoid negative-thinking traps. These activities help me support my teams, patiently and purposefully, when they need guidance and roadblocks removed.

### Accountability 2023

In October 2022, ITG Deputy Chief Information Officer **Bill Miller** pulled together the ITG senior leaders, tasking us with executing a new initiative — Accountability 2023. The initiative would provide standard work for ITG employees to aid in aligning our teams to the agency's core values. When we delivered the initiative within our group, our goal was to increase focus on results and collaboration across the teams.

After a review with Human Resources, we were asked if the standard work could be shared across the agency and we were happy to! The success of our culture shift is due to Bill's leadership approach. He empowers each team member to do what needs to be done. If needed, Bill will nudge you through coaching to course correct without dictating a direction explicitly. Bill's approach to leadership has been invaluable to me as I moved into a leadership role. I have been able to grow within my position by observing how Bill leads and I follow his example. 📖

Read more about Leader of the Year **Bill Miller** on **page 3**.



*Johnathon Sullinger*  
Chief Technology Officer

## The INSIDE LANE

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A WEB VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE FOUND ON ADOTNET OR AT [AZDOT.GOV/INSIDELANE](http://AZDOT.GOV/INSIDELANE).

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### On the cover

Videographer **Joe Larger** took the cover photos of the 2023 ADOT Annual Award winners. They are (counterclockwise) Leader of the Year Award Winner **Bill Miller**, Employee of the Year Award Winner **Cecilia "Cece" Carrasco**, Safety Award Winner **Scott Koberstein**, Innovation Award Winner **Connor Varela** and Customer Service Award Winner **Sharene Barrington**.

Meet all the award winners, including the Team of the Year, on **Pages 3-8**.





# Bill Miller empowers ITG team to success

**“EMPOWER”** was the word used over and over again in nominating Information Technology Group (ITG) Deputy Chief Information Officer **Bill Miller** for Leader of the Year.

In presenting Miller with his award at the 2023 Leaders Connection Conference in August, Director **Jennifer Toth** said, “That’s what a good leader does. They empower employees to succeed through coaching and leading by example. His leadership has made an immense impact on ADOT.”

The Leader of the Year award recognizes an employee in management who shows excellence in leadership, motivation, mentoring, staff support and creates a vision for the future.

Miller, who has been with ADOT for 26 years, was totally surprised by the recognition. “To be nominated as ADOT Leader of the Year and to win the 2023 award was such a surprise and honor,” remarked Miller. “Receiving this award has strengthened my commitment to being the best leader I can be.” He also wanted to thank those who nominated him. “It is a great honor to be nominated by my co-workers for an award of this caliber.”

Collaborating together on the nomination were, from ITG, Program Manager **Andrea DeCarlo**, Support Manager **David Acedo**, Chief Technology Officer **Johnathon Sullinger**, IT Senior Security Manager **Thomas Branham** and Divisional Finance Officer **Julie Beeck**; and Office of Continuous Improvement Lean Coach **Sarah Shank**.

Miller’s impact on ITG can be measured by the accolades shared by his nominators. They used such words as “motivator, supporter, communicator, empower, inspiration, mentor, coach, accountable, lead by example, a builder of trust, problem solver, decision maker and a guiding



Photos: **Joe Larger**, Video Services

## Congratulations, 2023 Agency Award Winners!

**THROUGHOUT** this special issue of The Inside Lane, you’ll see stories and photos of ADOT employees who received [2023 Agency Awards](#). They were honored at the ADOT Leaders Connection Conference in August.

“The Annual Agency Awards program was created to recognize the agency’s best of the best employees. Highlighting the work and achievements made by employees shows appreciation and helps to foster a workplace focused on recognizing the value our employees bring,” said Human Resources Employee Engagement Program Administrator **Kim Phillips**. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist

hand.” They shared examples of how Miller inspires change. But there is one example that truly demonstrates Miller’s leadership, commitment and care for one another.

A supervisor retired and instead of assigning another frontline supervisor to manage an employee, Miller had this employee report directly to him. He used 1:1 coaching sessions to build trust and improve communications. He identified the strengths the employee had and helped the employee become more confident and successful in ITG. Miller placed the employee with the team that fit with this person’s expertise. The results show this employee is a valuable member of the team and has aided in ITG’s success.

Miller has displayed the same leadership skills with ITG supervisors. He uses biweekly meetings to discuss problems, provide words of encouragement and empower these leaders to collaborate with others in ITG and ADOT.

Beeck said it best in the nomination, “Bill demonstrates ADOT leader values in his everyday work: communication, coaching, empowerment, advocacy and performance. He empowers his staff to grow as leaders, problem solvers and decision makers. The leadership qualities that Bill models daily have resulted in a highly engaged staff that delivers value to the customer. Bill Miller is the ADOT Leader of the Year.”

ADOT couldn’t agree more! ■

~ Kathy Boyle, Assistant Communications Director for Internal Communications



Leader of the Year Award Winner **Bill Miller** (second from left) is pictured at the Leaders Connection Conference with (left to right) Chief Financial Officer/Deputy Director **Kristine Ward**, Director **Jennifer Toth** and Information Technology Group Chief Information Officer **Steve West**.



Joe Llarger, ADOT Video Services

(Left to right): Motor Vehicle Division Customer Service Quality Assistance Project Team members are shown with ADOT leadership at the Leaders Connection Conference: **Daniel Carbajal, Jeanette Hernandez, Olivia Miller, Lezlie Jo Perkins-Hand, Michelle Aldaz, Robert Moreno, Isaura Nuno, Melissa Jacob, MVD and Compliance/Deputy Director Wayde Webb, Barbara Bulgrin, Erin Rose, MVD Director Eric Jorgensen, Bobby Owens, Robert Krusinsky, Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Director Teresa Welborn, Marcella Mendez, Tom Opalka, Tina Adams, Angel Blatzheim, Scott Ford and Director Jennifer Toth.**

## MVD Customer Service Quality Assurance Project Team improves data collection

**B**Y MAKING AN insufficient data process more effective, Motor Vehicle Division Customer Service Quality Assistance Project Team members improved accuracy by 10%.

The cross-functional MVD team members' achievement earned them this year's Team of the Year Award. The annual agency award is given to a team that demonstrates commitment to team successes, exceptional teamwork and collaborative problem-solving.

"The team felt that the previous way of collecting transaction review data was limited. Documenting identified errors was open to interpretation, making it difficult to identify common errors and develop action plans to resolve them," said MVD Internal Support Program Administrator **Tom Opalka**, who nominated the team. "Utilizing Google Forms and Sheets, the

team developed a dashboard that more accurately tracked metrics, and made it easier to identify common problems and correct gaps in policies and procedures."

Work on this project wasn't easy. The team had to become experts in the Google programs needed to create this dashboard, including learning complex spreadsheet formulas. But they rose to the challenge. This drive to learn led to individual growth and team success. And as an added bonus, they saved ADOT money by not having to invest in specialized software that is often needed to create these types of dashboards and reports.

The team worked together to create an updated process to find issues that negatively impact data integrity. The new process

allows team members to quickly find gaps in credentials, title and registration transaction policies, and address them. This has led to improved customer service and reduced reporting lag time. They also collaborated with MVD Third Party Administration to create a Google review process, which Authorized Third Parties began implementing this summer.

"The MVD Customer Service Quality Assistance Project Team is a great example of results-focused collaboration and how employees can work together to solve problems," Opalka said.

The MVD Customer Service Quality Assistance Project Team includes:

- MVD: **Barbara Bulgrin, Daniel Carbajal, Scott Ford, Angela Foulk, Jeanette Hernandez, Melissa Jacob, Robert Krusinsky, Marcella Mendez, Olivia Miller, Roberto Moreno, Isaura Nuno, Bobby Owens, Lezlie Jo Perkins-Hand, Erin Rose and Tina Zismann-Adams.**
- Office of Continuous Improvement: **Michelle Aldaz and Angel Blatzheim.**
- Infrastructure Delivery and Operations: **Colleen Spence.**

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist







## Cecilia "Cece" Carrasco brings positive energy to ADOT

Photos: Joe Larger, Video Services

**A** S A MOTOR VEHICLE Division Phoenix Contact Center lead, **Cecilia "Cece" Carrasco** makes sure everyone on the team gets a chance to speak up and share their ideas.

"Cece brings a positive high energy and personal touch. She is dedicated, hardworking, organized and focused on continuously leading and developing best practices to manage employee training both efficiently and effectively," said Customer Service Representative 3 **Britney Desantiago Pina**, who nominated Carrasco for the Employee of the Year Award.

The Employee of the Year Award is given to a non-supervisory employee who is highly motivated and results-driven.

Carrasco joined the Phoenix Contact Center in 2020, after working for Authorized Third Parties for seven years. She became a lead in 2021 and was promoted to supervisor in September 2023. She answers employee questions regarding policy, transactions or difficult calls. She suggests improvements for operational issues.

"Working here has been amazing. Hard work does get recognized and everyone is always willing to help no matter what field office or department. I'm proud to be a part of the ADOT family," she said.

Carrasco streamlined the training process — creating slides and personalized training to help others succeed. She takes

the initiative to help other employees grow and improve their performances.

She is also a subject-matter expert about law liens. She works closely with the Attorney General's Office and MVD field offices when they need assistance to place and release law liens.

Carrasco has received several Shout Outs from MVD colleagues:

Customer Service Representative 3 **Tricia Bernardo**: "She has a cheerful attitude, a calm presence and a can-do attitude. She has been a rock of stability as a lead and continues to do great!"

Contact Center Senior Manager **Denise Ohnesorgen**: "I just wanted to thank you for your dedication to serving the general public but also your investment in continuous improvement and improving our process and customer service."

Phoenix Contact Supervisor **Peter Portillo**: "The work you do is important and so appreciated. Thank you (for the) dedicated work you do day after day."

Customer Service Representative 3 **Darlene Roa**: "My lead (CeCe) is the absolute best. She gives the lift we need! I've never met someone with such love for her coworkers and her knowledge just amazes me." ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



Employee of the Year Award Winner **Cecilia "Cece" Carrasco** (second from right) is pictured at the Leaders Connection Conference with (left to right) MVD Director **Eric Jorgensen**, MVD and Compliance/Deputy Director **Wayne Webb** and Director **Jennifer Toth**.





Photos: Joe Langer, Video Services

## Connor Varela develops innovative guide to help employees succeed

**THERE IS NO** shortage of innovation at ADOT. Employees are constantly working to get results in the best and most efficient way possible. In less than a year on the job, this year's Innovation Award winner has already created something that will help other employees throughout the agency.

**Connor Varela**, a Tech I with the Quartzite Maintenance Unit in the Infrastructure Delivery and Operations (IDO) Division, developed a visual guide to prepare for the commercial driver license (CDL) skills test. It's a test that requires a lot of memorization of technical terms, and new IDO maintenance unit employees have to pass the test within six months to get their CDLs. Varela wanted to improve and speed up the learning process, so he created flashcards. He took photos of an ADOT vehicle and trailer, and labeled every part with information CDL test-takers need to

know to pass the test. Those flashcards helped him quickly pass his test, and now the guide can be shared with other units as a practical and efficient way for CDL-required drivers at ADOT to efficiently prepare for their skills tests.

"Across the state, multiple individuals are training and learning this information," said Assistant District Engineer **Jonathan Fell**, who nominated Varela for the award. "It is a requirement for hundreds of personnel, and I knew everyone should see this innovative idea. There is no better way to make this common knowledge than to nominate it and hope that it wins the top prize!"

Varela said, "This award makes me feel like my work and contributions are being recognized. I am humbly honored this CDL guide is receiving the recognition it deserves."

His work ethic and results-focused mentality have made him a great addition to the Quartzite Maintenance Unit, and his innovation can help other employees succeed, too.

"He's easy to get along with, and he's a good asset to our team," said Highway Operation Supervisor **Tim Mitchell**, who also contributed to Varela's nomination. "He's eager to learn, puts his best foot forward, and always shines and excels in everything he does."

Varela shared that his experience working at ADOT has been one of a kind. He is thankful for the recognition and hopes his innovation can help other employees succeed.

"Don't be afraid to create," added Varela. "We live one life, and your ideas can be life-changing. Whatever you choose to do in life, strive for greatness and believe in yourself to accomplish anything you set your mind to because only you can control your destiny." 🌟

~ Ashley Richards, Senior Communications Specialist



Innovation Award Winner **Connor Varela** (second from left) is pictured at the Leaders Connection Conference with (left to right) Southwest District Assistant District Engineer **Jonathan Fell**, Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Division Director **Steve Boschen** and Director **Jennifer Toth**.



Welcome to the  
**Innovation Marketplace!**

An innovation is the renewal of a product or service by applying new processes, introducing new techniques or establishing successful ideas to create new value.

Employees are encouraged to submit innovations that are shareable in the [Innovation Marketplace](#). Contact your [Lean coach](#) if you have questions.

*At ADOT, solving problems is what we do. Keep submitting innovations to the Innovation Marketplace!*

# Scott Koberstein improves safety in the workplace

**A**FTER HE JOINED ADOT'S Information Technology Group, **Scott Koberstein** hit the ground running to improve safety, organization and process improvements in the ITG Configuration and Deployment areas within the Arizona Highways building.

"The improvements Scott made have motivated and inspired the team around him to achieve every goal they are given. We simplified processes, added additional checks and balances in critical operations such as asset management, and completed many large projects. His improvements have been significant over previous conditions," said Configuration and Deployment and Data Communications Manager **Bruce Bosco**.



Innovation Award Winner **Scott Koberstein** (middle) is pictured at the Leaders Connection Conference with Chief Financial Officer/Deputy Director **Kristine Ward** (left) and Director **Jennifer Toth**.

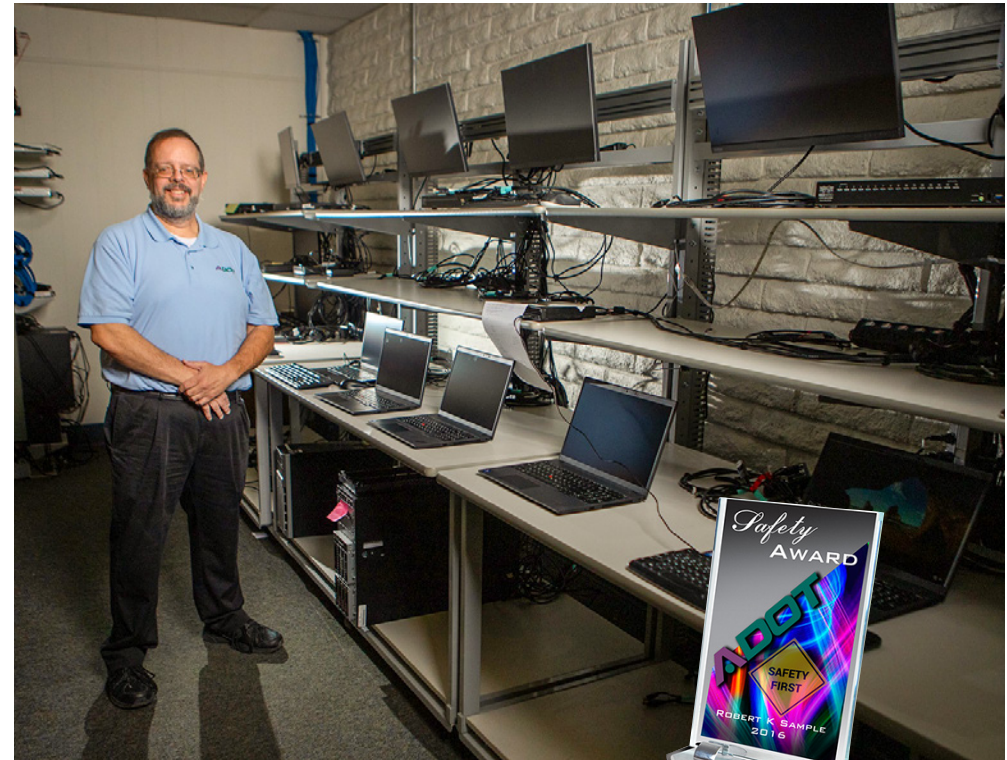
Items were disorganized and stored in several different rooms, which led to inefficiency and safety concerns. Employees had to navigate a maze of precarious boxes and other items to reach what they needed. New inventory was also being stored in two other rooms, which made them cluttered and hazardous.

He found a larger room to house all new IT equipment for ADOT, which freed up space in the other two rooms. He then thoroughly organized all three rooms, improving workflow and making it easier to find items. Employees no longer had to squeeze through rows of boxes or

Because of his many accomplishments since September 2022, Bosco nominated Koberstein, an Information Technology Group configuration and deploy supervisor, for the annual Safety Award. This honor recognizes an employee who increases employee safety awareness and takes an active role to improve safety processes in the workplace.

Koberstein's team is responsible for managing the IT lifecycle for the agency through new equipment purchase and testing, and set up and configuration for new equipment going out to the field. They also manage refreshing old equipment and subsequent disposal of surplus assets.

He found his IT group had outgrown their previous inventory room for new assets.



Photos: Joe Larger, Video Services

search multiple rooms to find what they needed. He also removed unnecessary poles from the middle of one of the rooms, installed emergency lighting and made sure all employees were prepared for an emergency by walking them through the emergency action plan.

Koberstein said he enjoys working at ADOT.

"It's interesting and challenging work, and I have the opportunity to talk to a lot of different people across the agency while bringing them new computer equipment. The best thing about ADOT as a whole is that there is always an opportunity to learn something new, find a better way to accomplish a task and be a part of a team that is focused on continuous improvement." ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



# Sharene Barrington goes out of her way to help others

**SHARENE BARRINGTON** is an accountant, an on-the-job trainer, and truly a top-tier customer service representative who goes above and beyond to help others — even in challenging situations.

That's why her boss, Customer Service Unit Supervisor **Sharon Jack**, nominated Barrington, a Customer Service Representative 3 at the Chandler Motor Vehicle Division office, for the Customer Service Award.

"Sharene always makes sure her customers are heard, and is amazing at breaking down problems to help customers solve any issues," Jack said.



Photos: Joe Larger, Video Services

The Customer Service Award recognizes an employee who has demonstrated a continuing commitment to excellent customer service through exceptional assistance. That includes being easy to work with, having positive relationships with coworkers and customers, and maintaining a professional demeanor at all times.

For example, Barrington listened to a customer voice his frustrations that he couldn't get a license he was applying for because he didn't have the documentation needed. She let him know if he went home and got the proper documentation, he could come straight back to her, without getting back in line. When he returned, she greeted him with a smile and got him his license. By the end of the interaction, she and the customer were joking and sharing stories. The customer apologized for taking his frustrations out on her, and even told her supervisor about her pleasant and wonderful customer service.

"My most important job is serving my customers, but I do a lot of other things. I am an on-the-job training employee and I work in the accounting office. I teach and train the new employees who come in. I follow up with them when they have issues. I help lead community events. I am here for the employees if they ever want to talk or vent. I do whatever I am asked is a good way to describe what I do," said Barrington, who joined ADOT two years ago after working 25 years for Walmart.

Barrington offered advice for new ADOT employees.

"I know it is a lot of information to take in at once but do not get frustrated about it. It is OK to make mistakes as long as you learn from those mistakes. It is a great place to meet new people and make new connections. We are a team and we work as one."

She said her success is due to support from Jack, who helps her reach her goals.

"I would also like to give a shout out to my teammates, who work just as hard as I do. We are Chandler champions!," she added. ■

~ Lori Baker, Senior Communications Specialist



Customer Service Award Winner **Sharene Barrington** (second from right) at the Leaders Connection Conference is pictured (left to right) with Motor Vehicle Division Director **Eric Jorgensen**, Customer Service Unit Supervisor **Sharon Jack**, Director **Jennifer Toth** and MVD and Compliance/Deputy Director **Wayde Webb**.