



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: AUGUST 25, 2026

FROM: INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE AND FILE AN OVERVIEW OF THE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT INCLUDING RECOGNITION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S
EMPLOYEES**

ISSUE:

Receive and file an overview of the Innovation and Technology Department including recognition of the Department's employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file an overview of the Innovation and Technology Department including recognition of the Department's employees.

BACKGROUND:

The Innovation and Technology (IT) Department is committed to working in close partnership with all City departments to enhance the quality of life for our residents. Our mission is to deliver innovative, practical, and dependable solutions that address City challenges while optimizing processes through strong technology leadership and professional services. By leveraging technology, the IT Department enables City departments to achieve their operational and service goals more effectively and efficiently.

Equally important, the IT Department is dedicated to fostering a dynamic and rewarding work environment for its team members. We emphasize collaboration, professional development, and recognition of individual and collective achievements. Team members are encouraged to grow through challenging assignments, continuous learning, and opportunities for personal accomplishments.

The presentation showcases the Department's employee recognition program, highlighting our ongoing commitment to celebrating excellence within the team. It also honors the most recent Employee of the Year recipient for his outstanding contributions to the City's mission and to the community we serve.

DISCUSSION:

The Innovation and Technology Department continues supporting the City's goals by providing dependable technology, improving access to digital services, and helping departments work more efficiently. This past year, the team launched several resident-focused tools, including the Rivy AI Chatbot that offers 24/7 answers to common City questions, Microsoft Copilot AI to help staff make faster decisions, and "The Dash," a new dashboard that gives the public a clearer picture of how City services are performing.

The Department also made major improvements to keep the City's systems stable, secure, and up to date. This included strengthening internet reliability, expanding cloud backups, improving cybersecurity safeguards, upgrading equipment across City facilities, and modernizing networks such as those used by the Public Library and Fire Department. These efforts help ensure City operations run smoothly and safely every day.

Additionally, the Department received notable recognition for its work, including the 2025 Excellence in IT Practices Award and a Top 5 national ranking in the Digital Cities Survey. Staff accomplishments were also celebrated, with multiple promotions across the team and Principal IT Analyst Erick Yerena honored as Employee of the Year for outstanding contributions to cybersecurity.

In total, the Department completed more than 30,553 service requests, maintained over 9,000 devices, protected the City from roughly 1.2 million cyber threats, and delivered 37 major projects. These achievements highlight the dedication of the team and the essential role technology plays in supporting City services and community needs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Maria Russey, Administrative Analyst
Approved by:	George Khalil, Chief Innovation Officer
Certified as to availability of funds:	Julie Nemes, Finance Director
Approved by:	Edward Enriquez, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved as to form:	James Johnson, City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation