

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

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**Betty Montano**  
City Clerk  
Kirkwood, Missouri

*In this issue, Kirkwood City Clerk Betty Montano shares her thoughts about local government service.*

and their decisions can have a huge impact on local government and how it operates.

## What advice would you offer to someone considering service as a local government official in their community?

**Montano:** Serving a local community is an experience that is not easily described. I believe there are individuals who were made for public service. They have the full understanding of what it means and that it is a time-honored profession. For me, I am one of the lucky ones who has had the opportunity to serve the public to the best of my ability.

## In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing local government today?

**Montano:** I believe that the issues local government faces now are the laws that are being passed in Jefferson City. More communication between the state legislators and local officials needs to take place so everyone has a full understanding of the needs of the local community and the reasons for the laws that are proposed. In most cases, it seems to me that some type of compromise could be reached. As an MML member, I believe the city of Kirkwood relies on the MML to make our voices heard in Jefferson City.

## How would you describe your city to someone who has never visited?

**Montano:** Kirkwood is a very charming community with turn-of-the-century homes and a thriving business community. Established in 1853, Kirkwood has long been known for its down-home charm, community pride, nationally recognized schools, vibrant business community, and involved residents. We have been recognized for

our historic train station that is operated by volunteers who serve as the first impression of Kirkwood, and they do a great job! From ice cream shops to the Magic House, there is something for everyone in Kirkwood.

## What are your interests outside of local government?

**Montano:** I spend a lot of time with family. We have a large family and there is always some type of competition or event that I enjoy attending.

## Where would you most like to travel, and why?

**Montano:** I have heard many good things about Ireland and would love to go there. My ancestry goes back to Ireland and Scotland, so I think it would be enjoyable to visit. 🍀

## What sparked your interest in local government?

**Montano:** I have always been interested in history and government from a young age. When the opportunity came my way to interview for the city of Kirkwood, I knew it would be something that would fulfill my desires to work in government. When I was appointed as city clerk 7 years later, I had no idea that my lifelong dream had come true.

## What has been the toughest lesson you have learned during your career in local government?

**Montano:** The world is ever-changing and you have to be aware of your surroundings and possible incidents that might occur. After the [city council meeting] shooting in February 2008, my life changed forever. However, out of tragedy good things can happen. While I am more cautious, I am also more understanding of the fact that it is important to assist customers as individuals. You never know what that person may be going through on that particular day and I do my best to treat everyone as I would want to be treated. I have also learned that state legislators

*MML would like to learn more about your local government career! If you would be interested in participating with the Review's "Getting To Know You" feature, contact Laura Holloway at [Lholloway@mocities.com](mailto:Lholloway@mocities.com).*