

Local Government Week: April 30- May 6, 2017

By Robert Wilson, Missouri LAGERS

Thank you to those who serve others.

How time flies. I'm coming up on my 23rd year of service with the Missouri Local Government Employees Retirement System (LAGERS). When I started, I didn't really understand what a 'pension system' was, or really what they did. I certainly do now. When folks find out what I do for a living, the response is normally either, "How in the heck did you pick that?", or "Wow, that must really be boring."

The answer to both questions is a surprise to many. My work is anything but boring. And I'm lucky that it picked me. I truly feel that I am so blessed to get to do what I do. I have the privilege of serving those who so diligently serve others. For so many, the world is spinning so fast and we are all caught up in the frantic scurrying of our day to day lives that we miss seeing so many things, often behind the scenes. Those who work in local government are often the ones in charge of the "behind the scenes" tasks that keep our communities running. They don't ask for much; they just do their jobs to keep everything running smoothly in all of our lives every day.

Here is just one of many examples:

With cameras in hand we rush to the ballfields after work to see our kids (or perhaps grandkids) and catch a glimpse of them in action. We celebrate, bond and picnic in the park after the game. We treasure the pictures but rarely stop to think about all those who did so many tasks- countless hours of planning, preparation, and grounds keeping -to help create these special moments.

Where to begin? Here is what that journey looks like before we even throw the first pitch or kick the first ball:

- City officials recognize how important kids' programs are not only to the kids and their families – but also to the community itself.
- City councils approve the funds and staffing to implement the programs.
- The various parks workers, put the programs together, assemble the teams, schedule the fields, and then train their staff to work the events – all to create that positive experience for our kids.
- Then there are countless hours of work preparing the fields and facilities for the first game.
- After the event is over and everyone has long since gone home, facilities' personnel pitch in to clean and prepare the park to 'good as new' for the next night to come.

I am blessed that in my role I get to see the other side. I get to go "behind the curtain" and see the dedicated workers who are doing their part to serve our communities and our citizens.

I could go on and on but I hope you see the point.

The next time you're at an event like this, please take a minute and look around. So many people are working so hard for your community...their community. Please give them a smile and a simple thank you. It is well deserved. They're out there working every day, hidden but in plain sight, for all of us.