PRESS RELEASE
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MAYOR ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REDUCE POT-HOLE WAIT TIMES TO TWO DAYS
PLAN A RESULT OF PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND WILL SERVE AS A MODEL TO IMPROVE AND REFINES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

INDIANAPOLIS – (August 7, 2008) Today, Mayor Greg Ballard announced that a collaborative partnership with Eli Lilly Lean Six Sigma for Service has resulted in a new, streamlined approach to addressing the mounting chuckhole problem in Indianapolis. Eli Lilly donated their time to assist the City in solving this increasing problem.

The Chuckhole Kaizen Response, designed to address chuckhole complaints within a 2 day turnaround, was the result of a 3 day event attended by cross-functional team members of City employees, facilitated by a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt from Lilly. Focusing primarily on Six Sigma project execution, Black Belts devote 100% of their time to Six Sigma and work to apply Six Sigma methodology to specific projects to which they are assigned.

Six Sigma is a unique quality improvement initiative that stands out from other improvement programs because of features that include: a clear focus on achieving measurable financial returns, emphasis on strong and passionate management leadership and support, a special leadership structure to lead and implement the Six Sigma approach and a clear commitment to making decisions on the basis of verifiable data, rather than assumptions and guesswork.

“I spent all of last year talking to neighborhood groups, business leaders, and others about what we could do to improve our city,” commented Mayor Ballard. “I realized then that we needed to partner with people outside of government if we are truly going to make this City as great as it can be.”

“Public/private collaborations have proven key to overcoming many infrastructure challenges that face city government,” said DPW Director David Sherman. “We’re working aggressively to encourage and develop these types of partnerships. We’re happy for the opportunity to work with Eli Lilly to develop a better, more efficient way of addressing the long-standing pothole problem in Indianapolis.”
Using the Lean Six Sigma approach, the City was able to apply suggestions from Department of Public Works employees to develop the efficient new chuckhole response plan.

“As a result of the new pothole plan, in addition to fixing potholes much more quickly, fewer service requests will be initiated by our customers and more will be initiated by DPW employees before our customers realize the problem,” said Sherman.

The new chuckhole response method is currently being piloted in a 30 day test phase which began Friday, August 1. An internal review of the pilot is scheduled for September, while full implementation of the program is scheduled for October of this year.

In the past 10 years, chuckhole requests remained under 5000 per year until 2004 when requests began to increase by 27% annually reaching over 16,000 during the first 6.5 months of 2008, a 220% increase over 2003. Because of the huge increase in complaints, the current cycle time for completing repairs varies widely. Presently, 10% are completed in 2 days, 50% are completed in 9 days, 75% are completed in 19 days. The remaining potholes have been waiting in queue between 19 and 373 days.

Due to the success of this partnership, the Mayor and Eli Lilly will partner to tackle other problems as well, including animal control, weeds, and trash.

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