

Progressive leadership. Avondale's mayor and council were willing to embrace the concept when the employee retention and recruitment committee first proposed it to them. Introducing the program on a trial basis also made it more palatable to employees who had expressed doubts or concerns in the beginning, while assuring citizens that commitment to customer service would not be compromised.

Understanding customers' needs. The city surveyed internal and external customers and found that a majority were willing to accept closing city hall on Friday in exchange for longer hours Monday through Thursday.

Employees are expected to dress professionally every day of the workweek and to put in a full 10 hours a day. Our customers need to know that we are committed to serving them.

By starting business at 7 a.m. and staying open till 6 p.m., residents no longer have to take time off work to conduct business at city hall. Contrac-

tible while employees worked out child-care and elder-care issues. The human resources department sought employees' input in crafting a holiday pay policy that assured fairness regardless of work schedule.

Employees are saving on commuting, lunch, and child care. They are also able to schedule medical appointments on Fridays, thereby minimizing the time they have to take off work during the rest of the week.

Branding the concept. The public information officer "branded" the program to include an eye-catching logo that touted both the environmental benefits and the enhanced customer convenience schedule. The logo was used on the city's Web site, cable channel, postcard, Post-it notes, and other items.

Getting the word out early and often. Prior to launching Green Friday, a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions was developed for city em-

ployees and citizens. Citizen payment and youth sports and class registration help minimize the impact of the Friday closure on citizens.

RETHINKING TRADITIONAL WORK SCHEDULES

Researchers at the Ramsey Institute of Public Management at Brigham Young University, who studied more than 150 cities in 38 states, examined the effects of implementing a compressed workweek for employees in city government. Their research showed that employees working the four-day 10-hour workweek reported lower levels of work-family conflict than their counterparts working a traditional schedule and that productivity and ability to serve citizens were increased, not diminished.

This has certainly been the case for Avondale. Employees surveyed report being absent from work less often and having more family and personal time. Employees also strongly felt that the alternative work schedule has improved citizen access to government