

## City of Henderson's Development Services Center a model for streamlining project approval processes

**HENDERSON, Nev.** – For most builders, developers and property owners, the building permit and inspection process of a project isn't something that's quickly completed. But for those working with the City of Henderson, that's no longer the case thanks to the City's Development Services Center (DSC).

The idea for the DSC came from a series of meetings between city leaders and local developers. By listening to the development community, the city was able to revamp the application and permit process and offer services such as online permit tracking.

"The creation of the Development Services Center was a collaborative effort between the city and the development community to try and make the permitting and inspection process more efficient for everyone involved," said City of Henderson Mayor James B. Gibson. "Since its inception, the DSC has really streamlined the way development happens in Henderson and has been a tremendous benefit to the people who do business here."

The concept itself is simple: the city created a team representing each of the seven City departments needed throughout the design, planning and approval process of a project and brought them together under one roof to provide coordinated plan review, inspection, and permit services.

"It's definitely teamwork," said Christine Kidd, manager for the DSC. "This is a family here at the city. And at the DSC, we're all working together to accomplish a common goal."

A simple, yet innovative, effort the development community has taken notice of.

"The City of Henderson has done a terrific job in making the Development Services Center a one-stop shop that handles all of our needs," said Rick Smith, president and CEO of RDS Associates, which focuses

primarily on office and commercial development. "Every time I work with them, the DSC's staff of experts from Public Works, Utilities and the Building Department have consistently worked together to help me get my plans through in a timely manner. Mayor Gibson and the city council have taken a hands-on approach to making the DSC as efficient as possible, and their cooperative efforts have resulted in excellent customer service."

Since the DSC opened its doors in December 2003, building permit and inspection processes that could take months in other cities are now completed in just a few weeks in Henderson – at little cost to tax payers, as DSC staff members are paid through a DSC Enterprise Fund. Through the fund, all costs of the DSC are recovered through permit and inspection fees.

"The DSC has drastically streamlined the permitting process," said John Ramous, vice president of operations for Harsch Investment Properties' Las Vegas Regional office. "They have shaved weeks and even months off the permitting process, which has allowed us to start our projects sooner and, in turn, has made our business more successful."

During its nearly four years of operation, the Development Services Center has become a model for how to get things done. Already, cities including North Las Vegas, Tucson and Minneapolis, Marana, the Town of Pahrump and Sacramento County have visited the City of Henderson to learn how to implement a similar system.

"Cities that can demonstrate they are 'pro-business' with predictable and reliable service targets in their development process have the opportunity to set themselves apart from the competition," said Jeff Leake, economic development officer for the City of Henderson. "The City has implemented internal tracking systems, developed online project

management tools for project consultants and has established review time service standards for each permit type. Since 2004, more than 98 percent of plans and inspections have been delivered on or before service target dates."

Located at 240 Water Street inside City Hall, the Development Services Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information on the DSC, call 702-267-3600 or visit [cityofhenderson.com](http://cityofhenderson.com) and click on "City Departments."

**For more information on the City of Henderson's Economic Development Division, call (702) 267 -1650.**