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**ORANGE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER'S OFFICE HONORED
WITH GOLD STEVIE® AWARD IN 2019 AMERICAN BUSINESS AWARDS®**
~OCAPA Customer Service Team recognized among best in the nation~

ORLANDO, FL – May 21, 2019 – The Orange County Property Appraiser's Office (OCAPA) has been named Customer Service Team of the Year, and has received a Gold Stevie® Award for excellence in the 17th Annual American Business Awards. The office was recognized for pioneering multiple outstanding programs.

More than 3,800 nominations from organizations in virtually every industry were submitted this year for consideration in a wide range of categories. Judged by some 200 professionals worldwide, the Stevie Awards are nicknamed for the Greek word meaning "crowned." The awards will be presented to winners this summer.

"With a 99.8% satisfaction score, the customer service team at OCAPA has changed the culture of the entire organization, showing all OCAPA staff the importance and effectiveness of excellent service to taxpayers," said Property Appraiser Rick Singh, CFA. "Since I took office in 2013, we have been committed to leveraging technology, educating the community, and effectively distributing meaningful information to property owners. Our entire agency supports these efforts and takes great pride in offering excellent service to the residents in our community."

"The nominations submitted to the 2019 American Business Awards were outstanding. They illustrate the continued vibrancy of innovation and high level of achievement across the American economic landscape," said Michael Gallagher, president and founder of the Stevie Awards.

OCAPA won top marks from the judges for their customer satisfaction metrics, labor efficiency, and a combination of ambitious, innovative programs implemented by the department, including:

Customer Satisfaction – Federal, state and local government efficiency standards are generally below that of the private sector, which itself is suffering from low customer satisfaction ratings. Since 2017 the Orange County Property Appraiser's office has collected over 14,000 customer satisfaction surveys, indicating an overall rating average of 99.8%. In 2018, the OCAPA Customer Service & Outreach department served over 9,000 lobby customers with an average wait time of under 2 minutes, and 71,000 telephone customers with an average hold time of just over 30 seconds.

Labor Efficiency – Maintaining excellent customer service standards requires planning and effective logistics. Daily and weekly planning incorporates numerous operational elements such as engaging lobby visitors and responding to phone callers. Daily customer service spreadsheets were developed to track and analyze workflow processes, making sure to identify all tasks performed by each individual, establish benchmarks for completing these tasks in a timely and efficient manner and continual monitoring to refine and improve processes and procedures. Through this exercise, siloed functions were eliminated, and cross-training opportunities were utilized.

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Outreach programming – As Rick Singh often says, “To serve a community, you must know a community.” To accomplish this, OCPA organizes, hosts and participates in a variety of community-based events throughout the year aimed at connecting to the tax payers of Orange County in a meaningful, educational way. These events include senior outreach, the signature State of Orange County Real Estate event, community festivals, and more. In addition, representatives bring OCPA to Orange County residents with mobile Satellite Offices, which allow residents to interact with OCPA staff in a more convenient location.

Compliance Initiatives – In addition to the responsibility of administering all exemption applications and determining eligibility, Customer Service and Exemptions staff audits all records to ensure compliance with Florida law. Using a customer-focused approach, filers are allowed to initially keep the exemption they’re entitled to rather than automatically removing it due to compliance triggers, which can cause confusion or financial hardship. Utilizing in-house investigative tools and field visits, exemption compliance efforts, including agricultural classifications and Tangible Personal Property audits, have – as of mid-2019 – returned a collective \$1 Billion in value to the tax base since Property Appraiser Rick Singh took office in 2013.

About OCPA

The Orange County Property Appraiser’s office (OCPA) provides a fair and equitable tax roll, remarkable service and superior professionalism. The office also assists taxpayers with applying for homestead and other exemptions as well as understanding their Truth-In-Millage (TRIM) Notices and Tax Bills each year. Under Rick Singh’s leadership, OCPA has returned more than \$1 Billion in value to the tax roll through compliance initiatives. An award-winning agency, OCPA was recognized in 2018 by the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) with its prestigious “Certificate of Excellence in Assessment,” earned by less than 1% of assessment authorities. The Agency has also been honored by the Center for Digital Government with a 2018 “Digital Government Experience” Award citing its effective online strategies for meeting constituent needs.

About the Stevie Awards

Stevie Awards are conferred in seven programs: the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards, the German Stevie Awards, The American Business Awards®, The International Business Awards®, the Stevie Awards for Women in Business, the Stevie Awards for Great Employers, and the Stevie Awards for Sales & Customer Service. Stevie Awards competitions receive more than 12,000 entries each year from organizations in more than 70 nations. Honoring organizations of all types and sizes and the people behind them, the Stevies recognize outstanding performances in the workplace worldwide. Learn more about the Stevie Awards at <http://www.StevieAwards.com>.

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