



County of San Bernardino



Ensen Mason CPA, CFA • Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector

DOLLARS & SENSE

ATC Quarterly Newsletter

Third Quarter, 2020

July - August - September 2020

COPING WITH COVID-19...by Ensen Mason

It's on everyone's mind these days, and I want you to know what I'm thinking about how we move forward together as a Department.

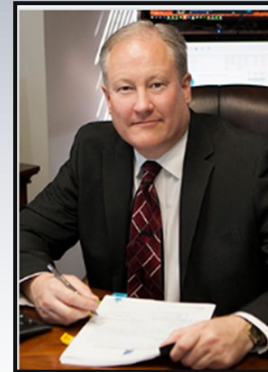
We've been working on this crisis every day since March, and it's still a work in progress in every sense of the term. I find myself having "Covid fatigue", and it's a bit like a runner hitting Mile 20 of a 26.2 mile marathon. I can physically keep going but I'm just worn out and ready for it to be over. The huge difference between the two situations is that a marathon has a known distance and a well-marked finish line to both anticipate and celebrate crossing.

We don't know how long the Covid crisis will last and there is no clear finish line, but we have to keep moving forward and doing our jobs for the public we serve. This crisis has permeated every aspect of our lives – our work, life at home, going (or not) on vacation – even going to the grocery store seems complicated.

I want you to know from my heart that I try very hard to make every decision based on what is best for our employees. We do a lot of incredibly important work, but all that is secondary to the well-being of the people in this building. Maybe you've felt you don't know what is coming next or that there's a lack of clear direction going forward. I feel the same way and am faced with things I've never experienced before on a regular basis. The "right" decision isn't always apparent in advance and plans change to meet changing conditions on a regular basis.

I'm used to planning things in an orderly, methodical way. I can't do that now and it's difficult for me, to be very frank with you. My plan is to do my best and hope to see the finish line to this crisis appear in our not-too-distant future.

- Ensen



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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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TeamSBC Essentials

Collecting Property Taxes During A Pandemic



The County recently launched TeamSBC Essentials, which is an interactive electronic newsletter for County employees. Departments were asked to contribute content on an on-

going basis. The first submission from ATC is a video titled *Collecting Property Taxes During a Pandemic*. This video features ATC Ensen Mason and Chief Deputy Tax Collector Diana Atkeson. It will take you through the environment of continuing to collect property taxes while the office was closed to the public. You can view the video here: <https://youtu.be/hoTm1H0pJUK>. ATC Mason and Chief Atkeson were both honored by the Board of Supervisors at their July 14, 2020 meeting for their outstanding efforts as presented in this very interesting video.



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San Bernardino County
Tax Collector

ATC ISSUES PROPERTY TAX REFUND CHECKS

In 2016, Upland officials voted to disband their Fire Department and join the San Bernardino County Fire District, which then placed a \$150 annual fire assessment per property, also known as FP-5. However, the San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation (LAFCO) decided to include San Antonio Heights in the arrangement as well. A San Bernardino County Superior Court judge ruled that LAFCO had no authority to do so, and that refunds to the property owners were in order.

ATC started the refund process to the affected property owners immediately upon approval by the Board of Supervisors. Over 43,000 bills were corrected and approximately 39,000 property taxpayers were issued a refund pursuant to the court judgment (San Antonio Heights Association v. LAFCO), and a Board Agenda Item (BAI) approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 11, 2020. The BAI gave ATC the authority to refund taxpayers in San Antonio Heights and Upland for the FP-5 Special Assessment that was placed on the tax bills for roll years 2017 and 2018.

Our goal was to ensure that all taxpayers entitled to the FP-5 refund received it, and received it promptly. If our office did not receive a valid mailing address for the refunds that were returned and marked undeliverable by the U.S. Postal Service, we cancelled the checks and posted the unclaimed refunds to our website at: www.sbcounty.gov/ATC/PIRFNet/Search.

The ATC Property Tax Team completed the regular refunds in one month, a very quick and efficient job indeed!



ATC Mason and Assistant ATC Doug Boyd provided the Property Tax Division staff Bundt Cakes by Nothing Bundt Cakes as a thank you for all their work in distributing the refunds in such a timely manner.

ATC INTERN PROGRAM

ATC Ensen Mason provided a big ATC welcome to our 2020 class of interns on June 22, 2020. We have 10 new interns and 4 returning interns as part of our 10-week summer Intern Program that started June 22 and will run through August 28. Recruitment was expanded to several universities including University of Redlands; California State University, San Bernardino; University of California, Riverside; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; and California State University, Fullerton. This year we received an all time record of over 125 applications.



Each University has their own process to submit applications for our Intern Program and students are encouraged to inquire with their career center or intern coordinator for details. You can also email our office at Employment@ATC.SBCounty.GOV for additional information.



ATC Employees of the Month (EOM) - June, July

Both of these outstanding employees received an ATC Mason departmental polo shirt, parking in the special EOM parking spot next to the building, their photo on the wall located on the first floor near the employees' entrance, lunch with a guest of their choice and the ATC, and of course bragging rights as Employee of the Month.

Kim Harper, June 2020, EOM



Kim joined the County in February 2017 as an Office Assistant II with the Tax Collector Division and quickly promoted to an Office Assistant III two months later.

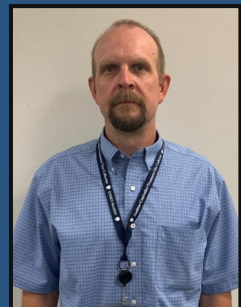
Kim is a dedicated employee who goes above and beyond to ensure the Division's goals and objectives are accomplished. Her knowledge of tax collection allows her to handle the complex task of processing Mobile Home Tax Clearance Certificates and the responsibilities of the County's Transient Occupancy Tax Collections.

Kim enjoys learning new things and is always willing to take on any task. She is an asset to ATC, and her hard work and dedication are appreciated.

Jason Horak, July 2020, EOM

Jason is a Programmer Analyst III in the Information Technology Division. He joined ATC in April 2019 with over 23 years of software development experience. Jason was assigned the lead for "Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go?" project. He took on this challenging role with a positive attitude and designed and implemented the Phase 1 features of the project in record time.

Phase 2 of this project entailed dashboard development using GIS technology. Jason took it upon himself to cancel his vacation and work through holidays to complete this project successfully.



Jason's commitment, professionalism, and dedication are well worth recognition as Employee of the Month for July, 2020.

Fun Fact About ENSEN MASON

I have always dreamed of building my own home. It's a place you spend so much of your life. I have always wondered why so many people are happy accepting somebody else's idea of a home. I am on the hunt now for the perfect lot, which is proving harder than I would have guessed. My plan is to make my new house as strange and unique as possible. It's not something I will ever sell, so I'm not constrained by what some unknown future buyer might want.

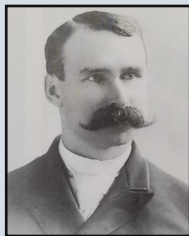
- **Ensen**

SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND — Successful Roundup



ATC Mason offered a personal \$100 reward to anyone with information leading to the location and successful capture of a picture of any of his 14 predecessors in office whose portrait isn't located on the first floor wall of the ATC building. Fiscal Assistant Ron Boyer, a veteran of decades of employment at ATC, found former

San Bernardino County Treasurer George W. Beattie after months of searching. He was rewarded by ATC Mason with a Certificate of Recognition and (more importantly) cash money for his efforts.



George W. Beattie was San Bernardino County Treasurer from 1889—1890. Beattie Middle School located in Highland, CA, was named after George W. Beattie. He came from a family of orange growers and educators. The Beattie Family planted the first navel orange groves in East Highlands.

BOOK CLUB Recommended Read by ENSEN MASON

I thought I would change it up a bit and go with fiction this quarter. I have always been a sci fi fan, especially the time travel genre. And who doesn't love Stephen King? The book club pick this quarter is **11/22/63** by Stephen King. Most people know the significance of that date, so much so that King felt it worthy of the book's title. His thesis is what would happen if we could stop JFK from getting assassinated. What different choices would he have made, especially regarding Vietnam, and what difference would that have made?

The book is more story and sci fi than history, but it is a fun read.

See ATC Librarian Tracy Calentti to check out your copy today!

- **Ensen**

ATC EARNS NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector's (ATC) office has been recognized with two 2020 Achievement Awards in the Information Technology category from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

The first of these 2020 Achievement Awards recognized ATC for its "Where Do My Property Tax Dollars Go?" project as customized by the Information Technology and Property Tax Division to support and enhance existing business processes and present property tax information so it may be better understood by San Bernardino County taxpayers.



Through a collaborative effort, the Information Technology and Property Tax Divisions developed an online tool that allows taxpayers visiting the ATC public websites to view a breakdown of the 1% tax levy, debt service rates, and direct charges of the tax bill based on the property address or parcel number. The project improved transparency and accountability by making data available to the public. The project is also instrumental in enhancing taxpayers' understanding of property tax apportionment. The successful implementation and benefits of this innovative project are deserving of the 2020 Achievement Award.

The second Achievement Award recognized ATC for its Business-to-Business Enhancement Project developed by the SAP Center of Excellence in collaboration with the Purchasing Department to streamline the purchasing process, improve processing times, and allow for faster delivery of goods purchased across all San Bernardino County departments.



The SAP Center of Excellence (SAP CoE) is responsible for providing production support to all County SAP (enterprise software) end-users. SAP CoE analyzes all business processes and ensures compliance with all controlled processes according to business requirements. SAP CoE partners with all San Bernardino County departments in order to understand their business processes and find ways to use the SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to assist them in streamlining their daily activities. SAP CoE collaborated with the Purchasing Department to develop a Business-to-Business (B2B) Enhancement, which went live December 18, 2019, for the Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) application of SAP. Grainger, who is utilized by the County for the acquisition of a high volume of industrial supplies and safety products, was identified as the pilot vendor to facilitate the enhancement. Nearly every County department utilizes the vendor, and the B2B Enhancement has been utilized to streamline the purchasing process, improve processing times, and allow for faster delivery of goods purchased across all County departments.

ATC Mason was honored to accept these awards on behalf of the hardworking staff at ATC.



Alicia Santillano, Norco High School. Alicia is the daughter of Linda Santillano, Chief Deputy, Property Tax. Alicia will be attending University of California, Riverside in the fall.

Class of 2020

Congratulations Graduates



Reagan Boyd, Eighth Grade Promotion, Goddard Middle School in Glendora. Reagan is the daughter of Douglas R. Boyd, Assistant ATC.



Jace Sulzmann, Graduated from Flabob Airport Preparatory Academy and will continue his studies at San Bernardino Valley College in Aeronautics. Jace is the son of Wendy Sulzmann, Executive Assistant in Administration.



Angela Guerrero, Jurupa Hills High School. Angela is the daughter of Charla Guerrero, Collections Officer I in Central Collections Division.



Ryan Cook—Bachelor's Degree in Psychology—University of Evansville. Ryan is the son of Rhonda Cook, Supervising Accounting Technician in the Tax Collector Division.



Ariana Clark, Cajon High School. Ariana is the daughter of Lisa Clark, Payroll Technician at ATC.



Jonathan Calentti - Bachelor of Arts, Earth and Oceanographic Science — Bowdoin College. Jonathan is the son of Tracy Calentti, Project Administrator.



Samantha Roth, Redlands East Valley High School. Samantha is the daughter of Tony Roth, Supervising Office Assistant in the Tax Collector Division.



Andrew Castro, Cajon High School. Andrew is the son of Joanna De La Cruz, Supervising Accounting Technician in the Tax Collector Division.



Nicholas Vallin—Bachelor of Science, Materials Science and Engineering. Nicholas is the son of Carlos Vallin, Collections Officer I in Central Collections Division.



From Left to Right—Kayla Montano and Isaac Chavarria, Fifth Grade Promotion. Kayla and Isaac are Karlin Montano's kids. Karlin is a Collections Officer I in Central Collections.



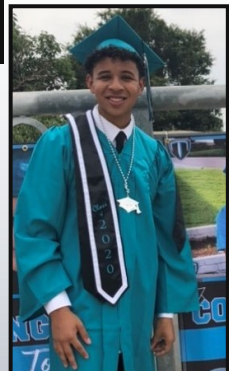
Ciara Bird, Beaumont High School. Ciara is the daughter of Lisa Garcia, Collections Officer I in Central Collections.



Tyler Berg, Citrus Valley High School. Tyler is the son of Rhawnie Berg, Accounts Payable Manager.



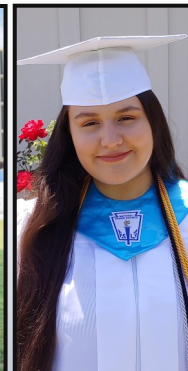
Ashley Aguilera — Medical Office Administration, Concord College. Ashley is the daughter of Christine Arebalo, Fiscal Specialist in the Tax Collector Division.



Daniel Tompkins, Grand Terrace High School. Daniel is the son of Loreta Lagunas, Collections Officer I in Central Collections.



Josue Verdin, Master of Science in Accountancy, California State University, San Bernardino. Josue is an Intern in the Property Tax Division.



Ashley N. Gonzalez, Ontario High School. Ashley is the daughter of Claudia Bonilla-Rodriguez, Office Assistant III in Central Collections.



Victor Rojas Ispach—Master of Science in Accountancy, California State University, San Bernardino. Victor is an Intern in the Property Tax Division.



Joshua Ramos, A.B. Miller High School. Joshua is the grandson of Mary Perez, Office Assistant III in the Tax Collector Division.



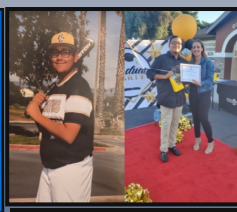
April Leon, promoted from Kindergarten. April is the daughter of Hanna Almaraz, Fiscal Specialist in Accounts Payable.



From Left to Right— Mason Hernandez, Preschool Promotion at San Salvador Preschool and Zaedan Hernandez, Kindergarten Promotion, Wilson Elementary. Mason and Zaedan are the grandkids of Delfina Hernandez, Accounting Technician in Internal Audits.



Jayden Rivas, Sixth Grade Promotion in Bloomington Christian School. Jayden is the son of Candace Rivas, Accounting Technician in the Accounts Payable Section.



Madeline Noble, Kindergarten Promotion, St. Adelaide Academy. Madeline is the granddaughter of Wendy Ridge, Office Assistant III in the Payroll Section.

