Richmond, CA

Mayor Rosemary M. Corbin

Visiting Small Businesses

VISITING SMALL BUSINESSES TO SHOW HOW MUCH THEY ARE APPRECIATED

As important as attracting businesses is to cities, retaining existing businesses is just as important. Small businesses make up a large proportion of our employment base. In the past they often felt ignored, and sometimes left town because of a problem that could have been solved with better communications.

Upon her election as Mayor in 1993 Mayor Rosemary Corbin and the Chief Executive Officer of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Judy Morgan, began a program to visit businesses to tell them how much they are appreciated, and to solicit their concerns.

Once a month the Mayor and the CEO or the Chamber of Commerce spend a day visiting about four to six businesses. In seven years they have not repeated. The response has been terrific. Business owners often say, "Wow, the Mayor stopped by unsolicited just to see how we're doing!" Mayor Corbin feels that she has learned a lot about our business community that she could not have learned any other way. She has also managed to solve problems that were bothersome, but either had not been reported yet, or had been reported but had not been responded to in a timely manner.

Some of the problems that have been solved include: a center divider that impeded safe turns by trucks, graffiti, litter, landscaping, drainage, security, building permits, and recruitment of employees.

Demonstrating the Mayor's appreciation of the small business community has created an atmosphere of mutual respect and comfort with a continuing dialog, and the business retention rate in Richmond has improved.

Mayor Rosemary M. Corbin

"The monthly visits to businesses by me and the CEO of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce have reinforced the fact that we value every member of our business community. As a result of our concern, businesses have been more likely to stay in Richmond and become involved in the community."

Program has been running seven years

CONTACT:
Bobbie J. Arnold
Assistant to the Mayor
Mayor's Office
2600 Barrett Avenue
Richmond, CA 94804
(510) 620-6503
FAX: (510) 620-6542
E-MAIL:
bobbie_arnold@richmond.ca.us