

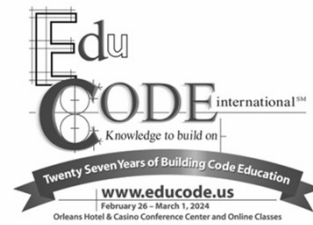
# So, You Want to be a Building Official?

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***EduCODE***

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## Disclaimers!

- Generic—Every jurisdiction and Building Official is different
- These are only **my** points of view...I do NOT have all the answers...no one does
- Class Spectrum
- Scattered Topics
- I need input!! (Oral or written)
- Note! This NOT intended to be a CBO Certification class!

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## **Topics (Possibly in no particular order)**

- What is a Building Official?
- Roles
- Credibility and Image
- Professional Development
- Budgeting and Staffing
- Fees and Revenues
- Customer Service, Politics, Ethics and Legal Aspects
- You as a Manager
- Adopting Codes and Fees
- Supervision, Administration and Management
- The Press

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## **So, What IS a “Building Official”?**

- Your thoughts???
- Code definition:
  - “The officer or other designated authority charged with the administration and enforcement of this code, or a duly authorized representative.”

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## Why Would Anyone WANT to be a Building Official??

- Is it an art or a science?
  - Kinda like Golf (skill + luck)
- The four “P’s”—Politics, Public, Personnel
- Oh, yeah...and Personalities

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## Duties

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## Duties

- IBC Chapter 1, Section 104, “Duties and Powers of the Building Official”
- Your job is to make your boss(es) look good (Is that always possible?)
- Your credibility. How do others view you? (Upper Management vs. Employees vs. Public)
  - A good person?
  - A monster?
  - An ostrich?
  - A good ol’ boy/girl?

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## Duties (cont’d.)

- Indecisive or shoot-from-the-hip?
- Fair?
- Trustworthy?
- Good/poor communicator? (Written/Oral)
  - Hint: Assume everything will be read by Manager or the Press!
- Work ethics
- Time Management
  - Triaging priorities (How is this done?)
  - Parkinson’s Law
- Leader?
- Professional?

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## Barney Fife vs. Andy Taylor

**Break It Down!  
Keep It Simple!  
What Are We (and the Code)  
Trying To Accomplish?**



**Which One  
Are You?**



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## Barney Fife vs. Andy Taylor

- Making decisions
  - Read IBC Chapter 1!!!!!!
  - “Life Safety” vs. “Everything else”
- “Shall” vs. “Is authorized”
- “No!” vs. “Sure. Why not?” vs. “Let me think about it.”
- Being analytical vs. analysis paralysis
- What’s your gut telling you?
- Do You Allow Staff to Challenge You?

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## Barney Fife vs. Andy Taylor

- The “Swimming Pier” analogy
- Setting a precedence
- Will this decision go to court?
- Making code interpretations
  - What’s more important: Intent or Letter of the Law?
  - Read Commentaries and Handbook
  - 104.10 Modifications
  - 104.11 Alternate Methods and Materials
  - Ask others! Network!!

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## The Code Parrot



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# YOUR IMAGE

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## Your Image

- You work for the government—Strike one!
- Dress Code (You and Your Department)
  - What kind of image do you and your staff project?
- Formal Education Needed?
  - Do design professionals make good Building Officials?
  - Certifications—Which ones?
- Technical Skills vs. Administrative Skills

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## **Policies/Procedures vs. Ordinances and Statutes**

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## **Policies/Procedures vs. Ordinances and Statutes**

- **Ordinances**
- Adopting codes. These are LAW!
  - Waive vs. Interpret
- Input on related ordinances
  
- **Policies and Procedures**
- Are they verbal or in writing?
- Have they been disseminated?
- Has there been buy-in?
- Can they be bent or modified?

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## Professional Development

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## Professional Development & Networking

- In-house
- Formal
- Involvement in Chapter activities
- Networking
  - You can't do it all by yourself!

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# STAFFING

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## STAFFING

- What type of service levels does your jurisdiction expect?
  - Plan review turnaround
  - Inspection completions
- Hiring personnel
  - What should you be looking for?
  - Technical attributes vs. Personality
    - The “**times 10**” rule

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## STAFFING

- Permit Techs
- Plans Examiners
- Building Inspectors
- Code Enforcement Officers
- Consultants vs. Full-time Employees
- Who reports to who?
  - Senior vs. Supervisor

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## BUDGETING

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## What You NEED vs. What You WANT

- Types of budgets
- Be prepared!
- Construction trends...past, present and future
- New programs...internal or legislatively mandated
- Revenue projections
- General Fund vs. Enterprise Fund
- How much do you need AND can you justify it?
  - Time Motion Study---What's included?
- Use of consultants
- Permit Fees

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## Politics

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## Politics

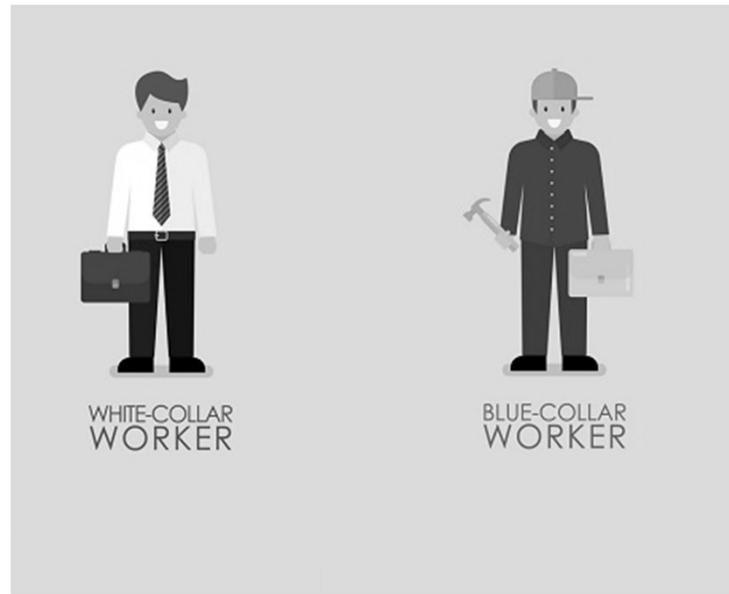
- Department/Division Politics
- Elected officials
  - Do we treat them any different?
- City/County Manager
  - Different types
- Department Head
  - Different types
- Friends of elected officials
  - Do we treat them any different?

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**You as a Manager**

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## Where Do You Fit In??



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## You as a Manager

- What does your boss expect of you? (How do you know?)
- What do you expect from your staff? (Are they aware of this?)
  - The “Out of Bounds” meeting
- Management Style
  - Micro vs. Laissez-faire vs. Hands-off vs. As-needed
- Working with other departments
  - Fire, Engineering, Planning, Legal, HR

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## You as a Manager

- Using employees to your (and their) benefit
  - “So, what do you *LIKE* to do?”
- Motivating employees (Support and Morale)
  - What makes them tick?
  - Want to feel: Appreciated-Recognized-Needed/Valued

Based on 2022	Born	Ages
Gen Z	1997 – 2012	10 – 25
Millennials	1981 – 1996	26 – 41
Gen X	1965 – 1980	42 – 57
Boomers II*	1955 – 1964	58 – 67
Boomers I*	1946 – 1954	68 – 76
Post War	1928 – 1945	77 – 94
WWII	1922 – 1927	95 – 100

Job Security and Stability  
 Innovation and Growth  
 Independence and Informality  
 Competition, Recognition,  
 Make a Difference

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## You as a Manager

- Should we treat employees equally?
  - Different types of employees
  - Favorites
- Empowering employees
  - Gut feelings
  - Allow them to fail *occasionally*
  - Accountability (goes with empowerment)
- Working Environment
  - Work/Life Balance (“Quiet Quitting”)
- Social Media Posts (Be **Careful!!!**)

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## You as a Manager

- Disciplining employees (***NOT*** Fun, but Necessary)
  - Dealing with cancers, slackers and slugs
  - Malicious Compliance
  - Harassment / Hostile Work Environment
  - Retaliation
  - Unions/bargaining units
  - Document, document, document!
  - ***ALWAYS consult with Human Resources!***

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## You as a Manager

- Goals and Annual reviews
  - Does employee get to set one or two goals for themselves?
  - Measuring follow-through
- Mentoring employees
  - Where do they want to go?
  - Training employees

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**Never Leave a Meeting With  
the Monkey on Your Back!**

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**Monthly Reports**

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## The Monthly Report

- What should you report?
  - Permit Revenues
  - # of Permits by Category
  - # of Inspections
  - # of Customers Served
    - Counter, phone, email
  - Plan Review Turnaround Times
  - Trends (revenues, costs, construction)
  - Other??
  - Format?

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## Adopting New Codes and Fees



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## Talk to Your Boss and City/County Manager

- What Questions do They Want Answered?
- What Might Your Elected Officials Ask?
- What Roadblocks Might Homebuilders Present?
- Should You Reach Out to Homebuilders Prior to Adoption?

Let's see what two City Managers (who were formerly Community Development Directors) might ask us...

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## City Manager #1

1. Is the code change legislatively mandated by the state?
2. Is the code change a safety consideration?
3. Is the code change part of a larger initiative like energy conservation?
4. Does the local building industry association support the code change?
5. Do local builders support the code change?
6. What likely resistance to the code change can the city or county expect?
7. Will the code change raise the cost of construction? If so, is the increase substantial?
8. Does the code change affect the cost of producing affordable housing?

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## City Manager #1 (cont'd.)

9. Is the code change time sensitive?
10. Is the code change elective? In other words, does the jurisdiction have the option of not adopting the code change?
11. How do you as Building Official intend to present the code change?
12. Have you consulted local builders and the builders' association to see what their level of opposition or support is?
13. What are the most important factors supporting changing to the new code?

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## City Manager #2

1. What is your transition plan moving from the existing code after adoption to the new code? (i.e. - grandfather in provisions for fees and plan reviews in process)
2. How will you communicate the adoption of the code change and transition plan to the public, contractors, architects and other interested parties to reduce surprises?
3. Will the code change affect processing times for various plan reviews?
4. Are building permit fees increasing with the code change? If so, why?
5. Are there any existing agreements with developers that would exempt them from paying increased permit fees?

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**CODES CURRENTLY ENFORCED**

THE 2012 FAMILY OF THE INTERNATIONAL CODES  
WAS ADOPTED IN APRIL 2014 WITH THE APPROVAL OF  
ORDINANCE NO. 14-829

**CODE CYCLES**  
EVERY THREE YEARS CODES ARE UPDATED BY THE  
**INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL**

THE MOST RECENT EDITION IS 2018

*THE LONGER A JURISDICTION WAITS BETWEEN CODE CYCLES,  
THE LARGER THE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY.*

**PROPOSED  
2018 INTERNATIONAL CODES**

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE (IBC)  
INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE (IRC)  
INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL CODE (IMC)  
INTERNATIONAL PLUMBING CODE (IPC)  
INTERNATIONAL FUEL GAS CODE (IFGC)  
INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE (IFC)  
INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE (IECC)  
INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE (IPMC)  
INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE (IEBC) **NEW!**



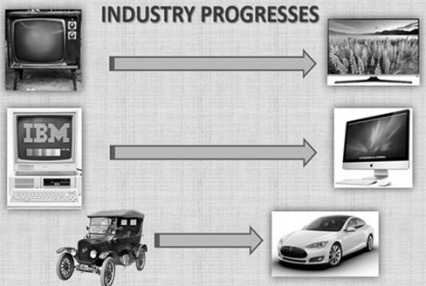
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**JURISDICTIONS THAT HAVE ADOPTED THE  
2018 INTERNATIONAL CODES (I-CODES)**

ARIZONA DEPT. OF HOUSING	CITY OF MARANA
COCONINO COUNTY	CITY OF MARICOPA
PINAL COUNTY	TOWN OF ORO VALLEY
PIMA COUNTY	TOWN OF PAYSON
YUMA COUNTY	CITY OF PEORIA
YAVAPAI COUNTY	CITY OF PRESCOTT
CITY OF AVONDALE	TOWN OF PRESCOTT VALLEY
CITY OF BUCKEYE	TOWN OF SAHUARITA
CITY OF CASA GRANDE	CITY OF SEDONA
CITY OF CHANDLER	CITY OF SURPRISE
CITY OF FLAGSTAFF	CITY OF TEMPE
TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS	CITY OF TOLLESON
TOWN OF GILBERT	CITY OF TUCSON
CITY OF GLENDALE	CITY OF PHOENIX
CITY OF GOODYEAR	CITY OF YUMA

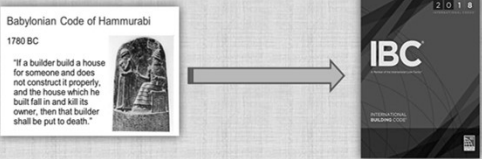
**WHY ADOPT UPDATED CODES?**

**INDUSTRY PROGRESSES**



**WHY ADOPT UPDATED CODES?**

**BUILDING CODES PROGRESS ALSO!**



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### BENEFITS OF UPDATED CODES?


- ALLOWS USE OF NEW MATERIALS AND METHODS
- ALLOWS UPDATED STANDARDS AND REFERENCES
- CLARIFIES SOME PREVIOUSLY AMBIGUOUS SECTIONS
- ADDS / UPDATES SOME DEFINITIONS (E.g., Greenhouse, Sleeping Unit, Repair Garage, etc.)
- ADDRESSES TINY HOMES
- ADDRESSES SOLAR-READY REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMES
- RESPONDS TO NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS (WEATHER, FIRES, EARTHQUAKES, LIFE SAFETY, ETC.)
- REMOVES MANY PREVIOUS LOCAL CODE AMENDMENTS WHICH IS THE CURRENT TREND IN ARIZONA
- MAINTAINS OR IMPROVES INSURANCE RATINGS

#### ADOPTION PREPARATION

- KEPT AMENDMENTS TO THE BARE MINIMUM
- CLARIFIED SOME LANGUAGE IN ADMINISTRATION CHAPTERS
- BUILDING SAFETY DIVISION COORDINATED AMENDMENTS WITH ELOY FIRE DISTRICT
- SURVEYED ROBSON RANCH CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYEES
- CHECKED WITH SURROUNDING JURISDICTIONS TO SEE WHAT AMENDMENTS THEY MADE
- MET WITH INTERESTED GROUPS

#### TRANSITION TO NEW CODES

- PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: EFFECTIVE THIRTY DAYS AFTER ADOPTION WITH A GRACE PERIOD ENDING ON MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021
- COMPLETE PERMITS SUBMITTED *PRIOR* TO APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup> DATE MAY BE BUILT UNDER EITHER CODE
- ON OR AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE, ALL PROJECTS WILL NEED TO COMPLY WITH NEW CODES



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# PERMIT FEES



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#### PERMIT FEES

The average residential construction inflation from 2013 to 2018 was 5.5%. It peaked at 8% in 2013 but dropped to 4.3% in 2018 and only 3.6% in 2019.

Forecast residential inflation for the next three years is anticipated to remain level at 3.8%.

Source: CONSTRUCTION ANALYTICS: ECONOMICS BEHIND THE HEADLINES 1-28-2020

#### PERMIT FEES

According to the National Association of Homebuilders, in 2019, **Building Permit Fees** Were, on Average, 1.7% of the Total Construction Cost of a Home.

On Average, Builder Profit is 9.1% of the Sales Price.

Source: NAHB Economics and Housing Policy Group  
January 2, 2020

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#### PERMIT FEES

"National home prices increased 4.4 percent year over year as of January 2019.

Home prices are forecast to rise 4.6 percent from January 2019 to January 2020."

2014 to 2019 = 4.4% x 6 years = 26.4%

A \$200,000 home in 2014 has risen to approximately \$252,800 in 2019.

$\$252,400 \times 4.6\% = \$264,428$  in 2020

Source: CoreLogic March 5, 2019

#### PERMIT FEES

##### OUR GOALS:

- ADJUST
- CONSOLIDATE
- SIMPLIFY
- UPDATE
- PROVIDE LONGER SUSTAINABILITY

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### PERMIT FEES

- THE **PERMIT FEE** IS DETERMINED BY USING THE **CALCULATED VALUATION** WHICH IS THEN APPLIED TO THE **PERMIT FEE TABLE 1-A**
- AFTER THE **PERMIT FEE** IS CALCULATED, THE **PLAN REVIEW FEE** IS 65% OF THE **PERMIT FEE**
- THE **PERMIT FEE** IS PRIMARILY USED TO COVER INSPECTIONS (STAFF TIME, VEHICLE USAGE, TRAINING, and ASSOCIATED OVERHEAD COSTS)
- THE **PLAN REVIEW FEE** IS USED TO COVER PLAN REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (REVIEW, ISSUANCE, TRAINING, RECORD KEEPING, ETC.)

### PERMIT FEES

- IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PERMIT FEES BE UPDATED PERIODICALLY TO AVOID FALLING TOO FAR BEHIND and TO AVOID A LARGE FISCAL IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY
- DEVELOPMENT COSTS WITHIN THE CITY ARE CURRENTLY UNDERVALUED BY NOT USING THE PERIODICALLY UPDATED **BUILDING VALUATION DATA TABLES**. THIS RESULTS IN LESS OPERATING REVENUE TO THE CITY OF ELOY.
- ADOPTION OF PERIODICALLY UPDATED **BUILDING VALUATION TABLES** IN FEBRUARY OF EACH YEAR WILL MORE ACCURATELY REFLECT CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ADJUST BUILDING PERMIT FEES TO COVER STAFF AND CITY OPERATING COSTS

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### PERMIT FEES (Square Foot Valuations From ICC Building Valuation Data Tables)

Year	House (V-B)	Percent %	Garage (V-B)	Percent %	Office (II-B)	Percent %
2020	\$122.46	0.00	\$48.30	-.88	\$177.38	0.96
2019	\$122.46	3.39	\$48.73	1.95	\$175.70	3.01
2018	\$118.45	10.6	\$47.80	17.68	\$170.56	9.95
2013	\$107.08	-----	\$40.62	-----	\$155.73	-----
2013-2020	+\$15.38	+14.36	+\$7.68	+18.9	+\$21.65	+13.9

Source: International Code Council Building Valuation Tables

### COMPARISON OF CURRENT PERMIT FEES OF LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

	CURRENT FEES					
	1630 s.f. House with 462 s.f. Garage (V-B)			4000 s.f. Office Building (II-B)		
	Permit Fee	Plan Review @ 65%	Total Fee	Permit Fee	Plan Review @ 65%	Total Fee
Casa Grande	\$1863.00	\$1210.00	\$3073.00	\$5175.68	\$3364.19	\$8539.87
Our City	\$1824.00*	\$1185.60	\$3009.60	\$4766.56*	\$3098.27	\$7864.83
Maricopa	\$1785.00	\$1007.00	\$2792.00	\$4721.00	\$3068.00	\$7789.00
Pinal Co.	\$1277.76	\$830.54	\$2108.30	\$2658.25	\$1727.86	\$4386.11
Coolidge	\$1001.40	\$650.91	\$1652.31	\$3873.27	\$2517.63	\$6390.90

### COMPARISON OF PERMIT FEES USING UPDATED FEES

	UPDATED FEES	
	1630 s.f. House with 462 s.f. Garage (V-B)	4000 s.f. Office Building (II-B)
	Total Fee	Total Fee
Casa Grande	\$3073.00	\$8539.87
Our City	\$2976.60	\$8047.05
Maricopa	\$2792.00	\$7789.00
Pinal Co.	\$1878.20	\$4386.11
Coolidge	\$1652.31	\$6390.90


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### BOTTOMLINE


INDUSTRY ADJUSTS ITS RATES TO REFLECT  
RISING OPERATING COSTS

MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD DO THE SAME



### TRANSITION TO NEW FEES


- EFFECTIVE DATE: THIRTY DAYS AFTER ADOPTION  
WITH GRACE PERIOD UNTIL MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021
- COMPLETE** PERMITS SUBMITTED PRIOR TO EFFECTIVE  
DATE WILL BE CHARGED OLD FEES
- ON OR AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE, ALL PROJECTS WILL BE  
CHARGED NEW FEES



### SUMMARY

❖ STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- MOVE FROM 2012 I-CODES TO 2018 I-CODES
- USE MOST CURRENT **BUILDING VALUATION  
DATA TABLE** TO DETERMINE VALUATION
- UPDATE TO 2018 VERSION OF THE **PERMIT  
FEE TABLE 1-A**



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# The Public

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## YOUR IMAGE (This Might Hurt a Bit)

- Do YOU Trust the Government? Well, Guess What....
- TV Shows, Newspaper Articles
- When the Customer Walks In:
  - Intimidated...Not Happy...Fear of the Unknown
- Did You Know How to Apply for a Permit Before You Got Into This Profession?

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## **We Are:**



**BUT, We Have Something in  
Common With Our Customers!**

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## YOUR IMAGE

- Weakest Link...Moment of Truth
- Make Them Go Away! (Happy)
- Each One of Us Is a Mini-Corporation
  - Do you want to go bankrupt or make a profit?

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## BE PREPARED!



- Every Customer Has An Empty “Gun”.....(Don’t give them any bullets!)
- Assume You Are Being Recorded
- If You Get Mad First, You Lose (Even if You’re Right)
- Customer expectations
  - Are you promising things you can’t deliver?
- Complaints against your staff...or you

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## **BE PREPARED**

- Look at Your Office From the Other Side of the Counter
- Interpreter
- Security
- Fashion Style
- Handouts
  - Time, Uniformity
- Website
- Checklists
- Sign-in Book
- Express Line

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## **YOUR ATTITUDE**

- Talk Clearly-Stay Away From Technical Jargon “Terms of Art”
- Professionals vs. DIYers
- Ask Questions if You Don’t Understand
- “Need to” vs. “Have to”
  - “We’ll need to get...” vs. “You have to give us...”
- Be Positive-”You’ve got a really good start here.”

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### **Some “Generic” Advice:**

- Let Them Vent
- Don't Interrupt Them
- Ask Them Questions
- Don't Accuse
- Explain Why
- Girls and Boys
- Stay Out of Corners-YOU Might be Wrong
- Don't Argue in Front of Them
- If You Made a Mistake, Admit It
- Do NOT Write on Documents!

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### **Some Generic Advice: (cont'd.)**

- Can You Bend This Time?
- MAKE IT GO AWAY!
  - Analyze Situation
  - Ask Those Involved
  - Precedents
- Like Making a Car Deal
- Make a Stand, But... (Triggers?)

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## Internal Customers

- Other Departments (Fire, Planning, P.W., etc.)
- Council Members
- Who is Your Customer?
- Gossip/Rumors (Defamation, Slander, Libel)
- Exit Interviews-Are they really confidential?
- Your Reputation
- A Very Small World

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## **Ethics and Legal Aspects**

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## **ETHICS**

**When it comes to  
public service  
ethics,  
the  
public's  
perception equals reality.**

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## **ETHICS**

### **ALLEGE:**

**Claim or assert that someone has done something illegal or wrong, typically without proof that this is the case.**



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## Ethics and Legal Aspects

- IBC 104.8 “Liability” While acting in good faith and without malice...
- **For legal issues, always consult your City/County Attorney!**
- Gratuities—Are these OK.....sometimes?
  - Cash, gift certificates, trips, donuts, etc.
- Preferential treatment
  - The mayor would like this project rushed
  - The mayor would like the sprinkler requirement waived

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## Ethics and Legal Aspects

- “I don’t care what the code says...”
- Right of Entry
- Discriminatory enforcement
- Board of Appeals
  - What can be appealed?
    - *Incorrectly Interpreted*
    - *Doesn’t Fully Apply*
    - *Equal or Better*
  - Due Process MUST be followed!

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## The Media

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### The Media

- NOTHING is “off the record”!!
- Ignorance breeds suspicion
- What’s their angle?
- Justifying your actions
- Protecting your jurisdiction
- Working with a Public Information Officer
- Public records requests

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