

But as proud as I am about what we've done, there's an even stronger emotion that I want to write about today: gratitude.

I'm grateful to all the DGS employees who cared enough about our department to participate in this year's survey. A record 78% of our employees took the time to let us know their ideas and opinions, and this happened during a period when pandemic restrictions and distractions probably made it difficult for many of us to think objectively about big-picture issues such as employee engagement and the DGS culture. Thank you for being willing to speak up.



I'm grateful that we saw major progress in some important areas, particularly our greatest area of strength – that of keeping employees informed. But you also were willing to let us know those areas where we are still falling short of our goals – having managers who care about employee concerns, operating by strong departmental values, and providing work that seems meaningful. Thank you for sharing your honest opinions and trusting that we'll do our best to act on your concerns.

And I'm grateful for all of you, for the work you do every day, and for the outstanding way you represent our department and Tennessee State Government. I continue to receive positive comments from other agencies about the way our work has helped them carry out their missions in one of the most difficult periods in recent state history. But I know no one from outside DGS can ever fully appreciate exactly what it's taken to ensure during this pandemic that our buildings are safe for visitors and employees, that our citizens still receive essential mailings from agencies they depend on, that state government has access to the vehicles, supplies, and contracted services it needs to carry out its work for all Tennesseans. Thank you for carrying on all this work with dedication, commitment, and resolve.

DGS justly considers itself a data-driven organization, and we place a strong emphasis on knowing what our customers think about our department and the services we provide. Similarly, it's important that we know what our employees think about our department and that we pay attention to their ideas about the type of environment we provide for them. As I've said repeatedly since we participated in our first Energage survey in 2019, we don't look at these surveys as a way to win awards, but as an opportunity for learning.

Your participation in the 2021 Energage survey has helped us learn more about our department, identify areas where we can make improvements, and understand better the issues that are important to you. I'm confident we'll learn even more in our 2022 survey.

With appreciation,
Commissioner Christi W. Branscom



IN SERVICE AWARD



Lisa Reaney, development manager with the Capital Projects Group in STREAM, is among 23 state employees selected to receive the Governor's Excellence in Service Award. She and other award recipients will be honored with a reception and luncheon at the Tennessee Residence in early August.

The Governor's Excellence in Service Awards were created in 2016 to recognize outstanding state employees who are at the forefront of improving the way Tennessee State Government delivers services. Leadership of each department selects one employee who exemplifies the goal of providing Tennessee taxpayers with the highest quality service at the lowest possible cost.

Reaney was nominated for the award by John Hull, deputy commissioner and director of STREAM. In his nomination he praised Reaney for embodying the department's core values and for building an individual connection with each customer.

"When Lisa joined the Department of General Services, she made an immediate impact by assuming the lead role in managing STREAM's Capital Grant program," Hull wrote. "She single-handedly organized the program to allow for real-time reporting of active grant information. She developed a program to educate the grantees on the process to apply for new grants and administer active grants to receive timely reimbursement of grant expenses. She also does a remarkable job packaging new grants for timely approval through the State Building Commission process."

In addition to this work, Hull wrote, Reaney has managed two groups of consultants who provide technical services for capital projects and has streamlined them into a single body. "This is a major improvement to the program as it allows STREAM to provide effective, efficient, and consistent oversight of the program resulting in a reduction in the time it takes to perform services for our customers," Hull wrote.

Hull also commended Reaney's work as volunteer "well wisher and motivator" for STREAM who sends birthday cards, flowers, get-well wishes, congratulatory messages, etc., as needed, and has volunteered for several task force initiatives within the department. "She seemingly magically knows everything that is going on and never forgets a person or fails to take an opportunity to celebrate or recognize someone," he wrote.

He also noted her community volunteer services with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, the Salvation Army Angel Tree, and other local charitable organizations.

Reaney has more than 21 years of combined state government service with TDOT and DGS.

The Governor's Excellence in Service Awards are presented twice annually. The next awards will be presented this coming winter.

