



KEITH CHIRO RETIRES FROM KENNER POST AFTER 28-PLUS YEARS

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For Immediate Release

Longtime Kenner Code Enforcement Director Keith Chiro retired Thursday, ending a career that spanned more than 28 years in city government as code enforcement director, assistant director, interim director of public works on two occasions, operations manager of the city regulatory department and office manager.

During those years, Chiro played a key role in the city's efforts to streamline the building regulatory process; conduct building code and zoning inspection sweeps in problem neighborhoods; initiate a revamp of city code of ordinances, merging them into the International Building Code, and his tireless work to help rebuild Kenner and its infrastructure after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Chiro, virtually followed in the footsteps of his father, Matthew – but fondly known as “Junior” – into the service of Kenner government. Those who worked with him said that when Keith Chiro was appointed office manager in the city regulatory department he set about the task of studying and learning Kenner's voluminous building code.

They said he eventually attained the ability to quote the building code from the memory the same way many religious scholars can quote the Bible by chapter and verse. Added to that was the ability to recall property plats and their owners throughout Kenner and to resolve enforcement disagreements in a manner that treated fairly all involved resulting in what was best for Kenner.

He has been on leave without pay since last August due to a non-work related incident.

One of Chiro's achievements was completion of the Community Rating System for the flood insurance program. The system is used to set flood insurance rates for every community in the nation. Chiro spent months learning the system, assembling documents for all Kenner properties that were made part of the city's application for new flood insurance rates and supporting the data in meetings with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

NFIP granted Kenner a change from Class 8 to Class 7, resulting in a savings in insurance premiums for Kenner property owners. At Class 6, only Jefferson Parish has a lower classification in Louisiana. Chiro became a certified flood plain manager and, in 2010, was awarded a certificate of appreciation by NFIP for his dedication, knowledge and assistance to the people of Kenner.

As head of Code Enforcement, Chiro was also responsible for overseeing the city brake tag station, the animal control personnel and issuance of occupational licenses.

Former colleagues credit much of Chiro's success as director on the fact that he knew so many people in Kenner, adding that much of his ability was from just being there – as a native of Kenner, as a long-standing city official and as a person who wanted to help solve problems that no one else seemed to know how.

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