

Alumna Nancy Kerry Finds Creativity and Solutions in Running City Government



Kerry helped to design and deliver a health benefits marketplace for California public agencies.

As the City Manager of South Lake Tahoe, Nancy Kerry spends her days finding creative solutions to road blocks.

This alumna credits her innovative way of thinking to her inventor father. "My father was a mechanic and designed his way around things," said Kerry. "I learned quickly that if you run into a problem or a roadblock, you simply invent your way out."

That has been Kerry's motto for working in public service. "I got into this line of work because I didn't want government to be a road block," said Kerry.

While taking graduate courses, Kerry met the City Manager of Carlsbad, who encouraged her to look into the career of city manager.

She worked for several public agencies, including the City of Solana Beach where she later became Assistant to City Manager. In 2008, Kerry was hired by the City of South Lake Tahoe, and by 2012, was appointed City Manager.

Kerry is most proud of her role in redefining South Lake Tahoe's pension and healthcare benefit system. Under her leadership, the City renegotiated current employee contracts and designed its own employee health plan. Today the previous \$53 million deficit has been nearly eliminated.

She is passionate about encouraging more female leaders in government. Out of 475 California cities, only 15% have female city managers. Kerry mentors women, encouraging them to take that role, and to negotiate fair salaries.

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