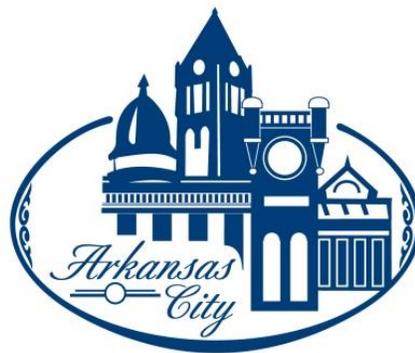


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News Release

Loss of Public Services Maintenance Worker Marc Tapia mourned

Street sweeper operator passed away Thursday night after workplace accident

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (December 22, 2017) — The City of Arkansas City has released the name of the Public Works Department employee who died as a result of a workplace accident Thursday.

Marc A. Tapia, 53, sustained critical injuries about 1:40 p.m. Thursday at the Public Works central shop, located at 1407 W. Madison Ave. He died about 5:40 p.m. at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita.

"I am saddened by this tragic loss," Mayor Dan Jurkovich said Friday morning.

"I am told Marc was always smiling and gave more than he received. He will be greatly missed. My prayer is that God will provide the comfort his family needs."

Tapia was employed by the City as a public services maintenance worker for nearly 2 1/2 years. He was performing maintenance as the operator of a street sweeper vehicle when the accident occurred.

Prior to his transfer to the Public Services Division in August 2015, Tapia worked as a wastewater treatment plant operator in the Environmental Services Division. He was hired Sept. 29, 2014.

"Marc was a wonderful asset to the City — a hard-working, cheerful, dedicated employee who always had a smile on his face," said City Manager Nick Hernandez.

"More important, he was simply a wonderful person. The grief and loss suffered Thursday were not just by his immediate family, but also his extended work family here at the City of Arkansas City."

A little more than a year ago, Tapia was selected by his Public Services co-workers to serve as their representative on the City's Employee Council, a group of nine non-supervisory employees who serve as a direct line of communication to the city manager and help to plan employee appreciation efforts.

Soon after, Tapia was selected by his fellow council members to serve as their chairman and was currently serving in that capacity at the time of his death.

"I came to know Marc through his work with the Employee Council," said Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson. "I was always impressed with his leadership qualities and uplifted by his great attitude."

For immediate release

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"Marc loved his job and serving the public," said Public Works Director Eric Broce.

"It was a true joy to work with him, and he will be sorely missed. He had such a positive and cheerful influence on all those around him."

Tapia perhaps was known best for his smile, but those who knew him also described him as a vocally avid fan of the University of Kansas Jayhawks.

"He was a friend to everyone and he will be truly missed," said Tapia's supervisor, Public Services Superintendent Randy Jacobs.

Tapia is survived by his wife, Tracy, and their two sons, Caleb, 21, and Austin, 18. His cousin, Tony, is employed by the City of Arkansas City as its director of parks and facilities.

Funeral arrangements are under way and will be announced at a later date, pending an autopsy.

Accident details

The Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department was dispatched around 1:43 p.m. Thursday to the Public Works Department central shop for a report of a pedestrian who had been struck by a street sweeper.

It was determined that the accident occurred within the shop premises on a concrete pad used to wash out vehicles. Tapia was outside the street sweeper, washing it off, when the accident occurred.

A Kansas Department of Corrections inmate laborer entered the cab of the street sweeper to clean it while Tapia was cleaning the outside of the vehicle. At some point, the vehicle began to move in reverse. The exact cause of this is still under investigation by the Arkansas City Police Department.

The street sweeper collided with a pickup truck and Tapia was injured between the two vehicles.

Paramedics stabilized Tapia, who initially was not breathing, at the scene. No one else was injured.

Tapia was transported by ambulance to South Central Kansas Medical Center in critical condition and then transferred by ambulance to Wesley Medical Center in Wichita. He died about an hour later.

The Arkansas City Police Department is continuing to investigate this accident. The results of the investigation will be reviewed by the Cowley County Attorney's Office.

The Kansas Department of Labor also will conduct an independent investigation of the accident.

"We will work with state officials to conduct a thorough, in-depth investigation of this tragic occurrence," said Police Chief Dan Ward. Investigation findings will be released once they are complete.

The City is offering an assistance program to all of its employees. All employees have been invited to a meeting this afternoon with a counselor who has extensive experience in critical incident debriefing.

Out of respect for the family in their time of loss, the City requests that all media inquiries be directed to Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson at alawson@arkansascityks.gov or (620) 441-4415.

Any inquiries related to the Kansas Department of Corrections inmate should be directed to Electra Knowles, public information officer for Winfield Correctional Facility, at electra.knowles@ks.gov.

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