**2021 Employee of the Year, Garen Essakhanian**

Garen has been a member of the City of Burbank IT Department since 2000, beginning first as a Technical Support Analyst and working his way up the ranks with a focus on Network Engineering. During his twenty-year run with the City. He has worked closely with many departments Citywide on many projects. The past two years have been particularly brimming with challenge and opportunity for IT, and Garen has risen to face it all with determination and tenacity.

## Dedication to Duty and Customer Service

Garen exerts seemingly unlimited effort to ensure IT Operations continue under all circumstances and to ensure his customers' needs are met. The IT team is not staffed 24x7, however, Garen is available and often working 24x7. To quote a Captain from the Burbank Police Department, "I just wanted to bring your attention yet another example of Garen's well established track record of professionalism and willingness to always go the extra mile! Not only is he a definite asset for the BPD, he is an outstanding representative of the IT Department... Due to the weekend hours, I had to call IT personnel (Garen Essakhanian) at home. Essakhanian was able to resolve the issue quickly from home."

An Assistant General Manager of BWP recently stated that Garen has grown significantly in recent years and established himself as the most dedicated go-to person in the IT organization.

## Innovation

The Pandemic forced a reimagining of technology services for the City of Burbank. Garen rallied his team to: 1) Migrate to Office 365 email in the cloud so that City employees could access their email from anywhere, 2) Deploy Microsoft Teams to enable online collaboration, 3) Deploy Fortinet VPN to increase the City's capacity to enable increased working from home, 4) Deploy Fortinet Half-Tunnel VPN to enable easy and secure access to online pay statements, 5) Deploy Microsoft Virtual Desktops to enable access to critical IT services like Oracle for employees who didn't have City issued laptops, 6) Deploy hundreds of new City issued laptops, 7) Configure hundreds of new VPN Accounts, and 7) Implement Online Public Meetings, 8) Setup the technology for the City's vaccination clinic.

Garen was key in the City's response to two major cyber-security attacks, taking fast decisive action to protect the City from serious compromise in the past year. First was the Solarwinds supply chain hack that impacted hundreds of public and private sector organizations. Garen's fast decisive action helped ensure the City of Burbank was not impacted. The second attack was a dual Russian based email account compromise and global brute-force password attack.

He then led the implementation of several cyber-security improvements to improve the City's protections. This includes implementation of MFA (Multi-factor authentication) for the entire City, implementation of password expiration and password complexity requirements, automation of server security patching, decommissioning of unsecure Microsoft Exchange servers, and upgrades for unsecure Windows 7 desktops.

## Teamwork

Garen is a key team player for IT. For example, Garen worked closely with Burbank Water and Power's Operational Technology group to implement an AI-driven cyber intrusion detection solution for the City to help protect against the risk of increased remote working. Garen partnered with PD to implement

Vigilant License Plate Reader technology in all PD vehicles. He also teamed with PW to implement a new sewer discovery and recording solution. The accolades received by Garen from other departments like BWP, PD and PW are numerous.

Other Achievements/Accomplishments

Garen also led the team that has enabled hundreds of community-facing televised and WebEx meetings to date.