
The Happy Feet Award

Last July's INDOT Employee Survey indicated that the agency struggles with non-monetary recognition efforts. More than 75 percent of survey participants agreed that recognition activities and events are not common, non-monetary recognition is not widely used, and the business benefits of recognition are not widely understood.

How are we improving our non-monetary recognition efforts across the agency? One manager shared his creative way to acknowledge his employees. He wrote:

From time to time, we award the Happy Feet Award. The award is given to someone in our division who shows initiative, teamwork, and innovation. Any staff member can nominate a co-worker for recognition, and I encourage our group to notice the hard work of others.

The award is presented to the recipient during a staff meeting. I provide a description of why the person was nominated and selected for the award, and then give the award – a small stuffed penguin.

Additionally, the recipient receives comments by co-workers on why they chose the recipient for the award. Examples of comments include:

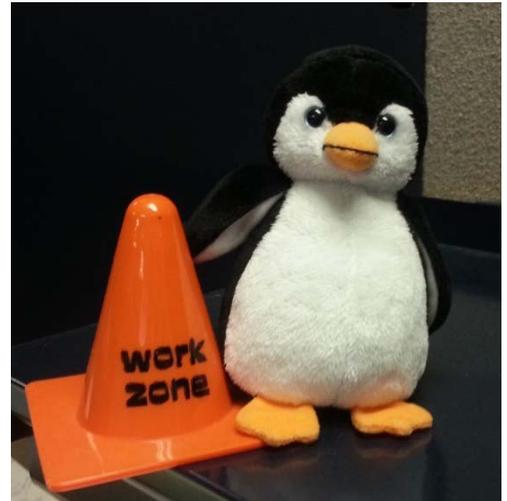
“(Employee) has been and continues to be a key partner in resolving issues and discussing processes to improve our department. He is approachable, knowledgeable, and willing to assist with anything asked of him. He is a great team player.”

“(Employee) is a fabulous co-worker. I enjoy working with him every day. He is an asset to our unit and INDOT.”

The penguin is a rotating award, so it will stay with the recipient until a new person is selected for the Happy Feet Award.

The inspiration for the award came from how penguins hunt for food. Penguins line up along the frozen ice as a group and gaze into the water until a brave penguin jumps into the water. This penguin risks becoming a sea lion's lunch to protect the rest of the group. If the brave penguin pops out of the water, the others know it is safe to jump in and find food.

How is Core 4 showing up in your work area? Send [Talent Management](#) your stories.



This stuffed penguin decorates the desk of the latest recipient of the Happy Feet Award.