

CORPORATE COMMUNIQUE

December, 2011

MORE THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

“These are the times that try men’s souls.”

Thomas Paine

Paine wrote those words at the start of the Revolution. Although for a different reason, they are just as true today. Presidential election years usually produce economic uncertainty. Add that historic fact to the economic situation already existing here and in Europe, along with the current social and political environment in the U.S., and it is clear that 2012 will be a time that will try our souls again.

To meet this challenge will require leadership at *every* level in business as well as government. In previous *Communiques* we have offered thoughts on leadership. Here are further observations on what it takes to be a leader in any organization.

- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Be solution-oriented, action-oriented, people-oriented. A leader’s enthusiasm is contagious.
- **See change as an opportunity.** Followers tend to resist change. Leaders welcome it – and take advantage of the opportunities it presents.
- **Have courage.** Douglas MacArthur once said, “Courage is just fear that holds out a little longer.” That’s good advice for any leader.
- **Take prudent risks.** The biggest risk is to never take one. One of the hallmarks of success is the willingness to take risks. Just be sure they are prudent.
- **Listen** – with the intent to understand. Leaders listen in order to learn.
- **Communicate.** Leaders set the example for open – and honest – communication. They say what they believe, not what’s politically correct.
- **Delegate and empower.** Leaders don’t dictate. They share responsibility. By doing this, they encourage growth in others, encouraging them when they succeed and supporting them if they fail.
- **Be committed.** Commitment is the catalyst that makes all the other leadership qualities a reality.

When all is said and done, leaders must drive performance. That’s even more true in trying times.