

[Narrator] You've tuned in to another edition of The Breakroom, a

weekly conversation about how the City of Saint Augustine

works from those who do the work every day. Hosted by the

City of Saint Augustine's communications director,

Melissa Wissel. The Breakroom offers a closer look at the

different city departments and provides updates on current and

upcoming projects and events and now, your host, Melissa

Wissel. [Melissa] Thanks for tuning in to The Breakroom. I'm Melissa

Wissel, communications director for the City of Saint

Augustine. This week, I'm sharing the studio with our

very own Communications Specialist Harley  
Miller. Harley joined the

communications team in  
September hit the ground

running with all things social.

She's been on the other side of

the mic in studio for the break  
room and for the first time you

are on the break room. Welcome.

[Harley] Thanks for having me. I'm I'm

much more used to taking the  
picture of our guests. [Melissa] And it's

funny to hear yourself. [Harley] It's  
very funny. [Melissa] And when you get

back to work this week you'll  
have to transcribe and do all

the things that you do for  
everyone else. [Harley] Yes I'll get to

listen to my own voice for 15

minutes. [Melissa] And you can say my

gosh I shouldn't have said

that. Oh I should have said

this. [Harley] Exactly. [Melissa] It'll be fine.

So you have been having a lot

of fun I think. [Harley] Yes. [Melissa] From all  
evidence no no evidence to the

contrary. Before we get started  
tell us a little bit about

yourself. You grew up here in  
Saint Augustine and now you're

working for the city. [Harley] Yes. I  
will give a shout out to Palatka

because I was actually born and  
raised in Palatka but I went to

CPS and I went to Saint Joe  
graduated in 2017 from Saint

Joe and then I went to the  
University of Florida where I

got my bachelors in event  
management actually. [Melissa] Right. [Harley] And

tourism. So it was a very  
natural next step to come back

to Saint Augustine and see what  
I can do here. [Melissa] So when you say

the event management and  
tourism we definitely have all

of that. But being in  
government I think you and I've

had this conversation. I think  
the exposure to that in your

education was good. Tell me a  
little bit about what you

thought government would be. [Harley] I  
thought government I said I

think I came in your your  
office one day. I'd maybe been

or two, three weeks and I came  
into your office and I was

like, wow. I thought government  
was going to be really boring.

[Melissa] Mm. [Harley] And I was wrong. [Melissa] Farthest from. [Harley] It's not boring at all

and that could be because I  
have a really really fun

position within the city but  
not boring. I was wrong [Melissa] so let's

start with your first hot topic  
was sing out loud and the

parking garage. [Harley] Yes. [Melissa] Parking  
garage was closed. What else

did we have? [Harley] It was road  
closures you know traffic

disruptions generally not just  
road heavy traffic I should say

the parking garage being closed  
for that weekend and just

general messaging you know  
solid waste you know schedule

would be altered that week and

Sing Out Loud was actually

through two weeks three weeks

after I started [Melissa] right [Harley] and you

know I dove right in and that

was my first exposure to how

passionate our our citizens are

and it was a great exposure

Honestly, I was like I said, I

thought it was it was going to

be boring. I'm just putting

information out but the

information matters to people

and that was my first real

experience with that and it was

it was pretty awesome. It was

kind of scary. [Melissa] Well, you

handled it very well and that's

the best thing we can do. Like

you said, we're our job is to

inform our residents, our  
citizens, even our visitors but

it didn't stop with Sing Out  
Loud and I went from Sing Out

Loud and then we jumped right  
into the nightlife ordinance.

[Harley] Yes, another [Melissa] passionate topic.

[Harley] Yes, another great exposure to

the passion of our citizens and  
I love it. I love when it's a

topic that gets people talking  
and and gets people you know

one way or another excited not  
excited whatever about a topic

because I get to see it all and  
I get to see how much people

care about the city and we care  
and it's you know it opens a

conversation I I really enjoyed  
that the night life night life

ordinance was was a big one  
especially people actually

showing up to the city  
commission meeting and that was

only maybe my Third or fourth  
commission meeting and I it's

like oh my gosh. [Melissa] Packed rooms.  
[Harley] Look at all these people. Yeah.

They were letting like one in  
and one out and I was you know

being from a small town like  
Palatka and I even lived on the

outskirts of town. This truly  
is my first exposure to to

local government like this. So  
it has been very very

interesting. Very exciting. [Melissa] I  
think you also see and we have

these conversations a lot is

when you start getting that

feedback particularly on social

Not just within our post but

you watch the other groups.

[Harley] Yes. [Melissa] And you can listen to

sentiment. You can hear what

people are getting right. [Harley] Yes.

[Melissa] Or what they're getting wrong.

[Harley] Yes. [Melissa] Um we're we're going to go

right into the next topic

because I think what I love

talking about with you on the

air now for our interview is

I'm hoping that people realize

we're a very small team. [Harley] Yes.

Of two but and three including

Kym. Kym is our web admin

coordinator but you really are

the one that takes all of those

comments, all of that  
sentiment, missing information,

write information, and you  
adapt our message too. [Harley] Yes.

[Melissa] What are people not getting?

So, I'm going to jump right

into what people were not  
getting. No offense to those

listeners that didn't get it  
but the park now card. [Harley] Yes.

[Melissa] That we thought park now card.

We're just taking away the

card. [Harley] The physical card. That's  
it. [Melissa] That's it. [Harley] But it was much

more than that to people and I  
again, the sentiment and

listening to people and  
gathering all, you know, my

sort of analytics and data. I

think I have a really holistic

approach to it where I don't I

don't care about I care about

the numbers but I care much

more about what people saying

because that's how we're

going to drive forward is what

do you actually care about and

what are people saying and

people very much cared about

the park now card right which

again the technology was

obsolete there was nothing that

could be done about the

physical card but you know

people are still talking about

it and that was months ago and

people are still passionate I'm

still answering messages and

still putting information out

there but I love knowing that

it is reaching people and I'm

I'm getting the information out

and it people may be confused.

I get confused. I get it but

you know, we're we're doing a

good job with that and I think

me and I'll give a shout out to

Tara in parking. [Melissa] Tara Bennie. [Harley] I

think she's my number one

messenger on teams. [Melissa] Yes. [Harley] I'm

like, can you help me answer

this? I'm sorry to bother you.

She's like, no, you're helping.

You know, we, I love, that's a

good example of getting to

communicate with a lot of

different departments to get

the correct information out

there. That's been big. [Melissa] We, you  
actually talking a little bit

too about shifting the Message  
a little bit even with the

parking you did a recent sort  
of mini campaign a little bit

about the difference between a  
city parking lot and a non-city

parking lot. [Harley] Yes. [Melissa] And that did  
well. [Harley] Yeah and that came from

like you said adapting the  
messaging. You know I can put

out information all day long  
but it's the listening to

people and what are they  
understanding and not and we've

had people come up to us in  
public and and say to us I

parked at this lot and I got  
charged this and you know can

you look into this and we went  
and physically walked to the

parking lot and it was a  
private lot and this the signs,

the logos, it does look  
similar. So, that's where it

sparked the idea of what if we  
just did a side by side.

[Melissa] Right. [Harley] This is what a city  
where your Saint Johns County

resident discount will apply.  
This is private. You know, we

don't tow people. You'll get a  
ticket. The you know, these

differences that matter. It  
matters to people. [Melissa] Definitely

matters and and you're getting  
the word out. If you're just

now tuning in, you're listening  
to the break room and I have a

Harley Miller in studio with us.

She is our communication

specialist. Everything social.

So, Harley, talking about

social, we we rely really  
heavily on Facebook and I think

sometimes we get a little bit  
of push back of what if I'm not

on social, what if I'm not on  
Facebook but those aren't the,

that's not the only place. [Harley] No,  
as much as my job is very

social media, heavy Instagram,  
Facebook, Twitter. Um we also

do have the break room podcast.

[Melissa] Yeah. [Harley] That we do that gets

information out there and then

I also every week put out the

news and notes newsletter and  
you can subscribe to that on

our site and I also people  
reach out to me to help them

subscribe and I'm more than  
happy to do that again I I love

talking with the citizens so if  
you need my help reach out

reach out and then we also have  
next door which I think is a

great platform that can be sort  
of under appreciated and under

utilized especially when it's  
something specific to a

neighborhood we can put it in  
the neighborhood so if you're

not on next door I would check  
it out as well check out next

door yeah [Melissa] and just I go it's

Next Door. com. You put in your

address. [Harley] Yep. [Melissa] And you only you  
can see citywide things. [Harley] Yes.

[Melissa] And then you can also see your  
own neighborhood. [Harley] Yes. You'll

see everything from the city if  
you're within the city. City

limits. Limits and then you can  
also get specific messaging to

your neighborhood based on your  
address. So. [Melissa] Okay and so

talking a little bit we talked  
about I I used the term

campaign I think when we were  
talking about the side by sides

of parking. Campaigns are  
Something that you and I have

talked about. We're really  
trying to get into and we have

some fun ones that we did and

we have another one that's been

launched. Tell us about our

campaigns. What does a campaign

mean and how do we how do you

come up with that? [Harley] Campaigns

are super fun. I love we have

obviously a very ongoing

campaign which is Face of the

City which is a great example.

Every week we're putting

something out and then we

recently launched the # City

Saint Aug Kicks Glass. [Melissa] Right.

[Harley] Campaign just promote our glass

recycling drop off locations

and put that on people's radar

save your glass bottles take

them to a drop off and then

upcoming or we've launched it

we have no poop left unscooped  
and that came from our solid

waste manager Olivia Smith she  
came to me and said we have we

have a need for it. We have a  
need to put messaging out about

picking up after your dog if  
you're you know walking the

streets, walking downtown in  
our parks. Um so she said have

fun. Get creative with it. [Melissa] What  
can we do? [Harley] You know what can we

do and and I came up with the  
no poop left unscooped. So

you'll see that over the summer  
a lot. Um and I think it's

going to it's going to be  
really good and and it's a fun

way to get messages out and and  
not be so maybe [Melissa] Critical Maybe or just.

[Harley] Yeah. [Melissa] It's a way it gets a  
little attention. [Harley] You get

people's attention and it's  
it's not. [Melissa] It's hard to be fun.

[Harley] It's hard to be fun. [Melissa] We like to  
be fun but we have to be

careful because if you get too  
funny, you get criticized. If

you're too serious, you get  
criticized. [Harley] Yes. [Melissa] The thing

about the no poop going  
unscooped, left unscooped. Um

it's just, it, what I like  
about it too is it's not just

about scooping, it's also about  
where the locations that you

have the Dog waste dispensers. The  
dog waste baggies and where in

the neighborhood you can find  
them and can you if if you live

in a neighborhood that doesn't  
have one of those, can we get

them? Can they call Olivia or?

[Harley] I believe that there don't

completely quote me on this I  
guess but Olivia has said that

we will be working on maps with  
GIS so there's specific

locations and then she said  
there is possibly upcoming

going to be more sanitation  
areas put maybe in

neighborhoods that don't them. So.

[Melissa] And I think that's what you

like too is you talk to our  
departments, you listen to the

residents, and we really do

respond. [Harley] Yes. Try. We try our

best to respond. We, you know,  
like you said, we are a small

department. It's really just  
the two of us in in the

forward-facing messaging but I,  
that's the best part of my job.

I get to look around, see what  
people are saying, what are

people talking about and then,  
on the flip side, internally,

what do you need? What do you  
think needs to be sent out?

What are you seeing, your boots on the  
ground, what are you seeing in

your department that needs and  
I sort of merge those two

things or I try my best to to  
to resonate with residents and

also get out what is important.

[Melissa] It's more than just meeting

notices. [Harley] Yes. People get

passionate. The other one I'm

going to throw this one out

there. The other one I think

that was I'm going to it's a

little bit touchy but it was a

great campaign. There's not

even a campaign but our public

art. [Harley] Yes. [Melissa] Up at Main Street.

Yes. The ninety-nine we got

ninety-nine proposals. [Harley] Yes. [Melissa] For

interest in doing a public art.

[Harley] Yes. [Melissa] And we thought we were

just posting a meeting notice.

[Harley] Yes. Anything we posted about

the public art has has blown up

so to speak. Um it's been

really great and that's another

thing where it's you know

seeing what people are

passionate about. I I love it.

I love when people are telling

me what they think because then

I can take that. Like I said I

have sort of a holistic

approach and then I know what

needs needs to be put out there

or you know responding to

people and saying you know we

hear You know, if we get a DM,

I try to answer every DM within

twenty-four, 48 hours even if

it's just me saying thank you

for your inquiry. [Melissa] Right.

[Harley] Because I am reading them, I do

see them. Yeah. Um and real

quick, we've gotta wrap this

up. Just one other comment I'll

throw out to our audience. We'd  
really don't engage. [Harley] Yeah. [Melissa] We

just try to respond answering  
questions, correcting

misinformation, and kudos to  
our supporters and those who

help correct our messages. [Harley] Yes,  
absolutely. [Melissa] Correct the

residents or the folks that  
that get it that don't

understand. [Harley] I love when it  
turns into residents helping

residents. It's my favorite  
thing to watch. [Melissa] Awesome. Well,

we are out of time. Thanks for  
coming in and everybody can

find us on our social media  
platforms Facebook, Twitter,

Instagram at City Saint Aug and  
we will catch you next time.

Thanks for tuning in. [Narrator] You've  
been listening to The

Breakroom, a weekly program  
addressing projects and

programs offered by the City of  
Saint Augustine. Join us each

week as the city's  
communications director Melissa

Whistle has in-depth  
conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet  
the needs of our See you at

this time next week for another  
edition of The Break Room.