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**SGR 10 in 10**

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**From** SGR (Strategic Government Resources) <SGR@GovernmentResource.com>

**Date** Tue 04/07/2026 10:46 AM

**To** Maura Gast <mgast@cityofirving.org>

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### **Who Does Your Community Choose to Be?**

Last week, I shared some thoughts on community trauma and how those moments can leave a lasting mark on a community. But as significant as those experiences are, they're only part of the story. What matters just as much is what comes next.

Communities don't get to choose every challenge they face, but they do have a say in how those experiences shape them over time. That's where identity starts to take form.

I saw this play out in Fort Collins following the 1997 flood. It was a devastating event (killing 5 people) that impacted the entire community. In the years that followed, the work wasn't just about recovery. There was a broader shift toward thinking more intentionally about preparedness and resilience, along with a deeper understanding of the role the organization

plays in serving the community. Long-term, sustained investments were made in stormwater infrastructure, but just as importantly, there was a change in mindset that influenced decisions well beyond that moment.

Over time, those choices became part of the community's identity.

More broadly, every community has an identity, whether it's been clearly defined or not. It takes shape through decisions and is reinforced over time through actions, becoming visible in how people experience the organization.

It shows up in ways that aren't always obvious at first. You see it in how leaders approach decisions and in the way teams work together, especially in how priorities are ultimately set. You also see it in the day-to-day interactions with residents and in the consistency of service delivery. Over time, those patterns begin to tell a story about who the community is.

The communities that seem to navigate change most effectively tend to have a clear sense of who they want to be. That clarity doesn't eliminate challenges, but it does provide a steady point of reference when decisions need to be made. It also builds trust over time, both within the organization and in the community.

For leaders, that creates a level of responsibility that extends far beyond any single decision or moment. Whether responding to a significant event or working through everyday priorities, each choice contributes to the broader direction of the organization.

In the end, a community's identity isn't defined by a single moment. It's shaped over time through the accumulation of decisions, actions, and experiences.

So it's worth stepping back and asking a simple question: who do you want your community to be and how are you helping define that through the choices being made today?

**Darin Atteberry**

CEO, SGR