

# DAY IN THE LIFE

Dan Berlenbach,  
City of Long Beach





**Meet Dan Berlenbach, Fleet Services Manager for the City of Long Beach, California.**

Berlenbach has been working in the fleet management industry for over 40 years. Yes, you read that right: forty, as in 4-0. In addition, he has been in his current role with the City of Long Beach for five years. That's not even the biggest news as of recently: Dan Berlenbach was also named the Public Sector Fleet Manager of the Year at the 2019 Government Fleet Expo (GFX) in New Orleans, LA. Naturally, we had to catch up with him after this big win.

Would you like to hear about a typical day in the life of Dan Berlenbach, 2019 Public Sector Fleet Manager of the Year?

You're in luck. Welcome to a day in the life of the fleet manager of the year.

**Beginning of the day**

As the fleet services manager, Berlenbach is responsible for all things "capturing, compiling, and making usable" from the "myriad streams of data that we now get from servicing the fleet, fueling it, and operators driving it." With AssetWorks FleetFocus fleet management software, Berlenbach finds himself spending much of the day reviewing reports and data points that have been generated from the system. "Ours is a large fleet," said Berlenbach, "and we are extensively data-driven... it's very challenging to make the [data] usable, given the amount of data available."

To get his busy days rolling, he makes coffee for all of the office coffee drinkers. Once everyone is satisfied, "then I try to organize my day."

Berlenbach's responsibilities are directly tied to the financial operations of the City. Naturally, one of the first people he will talk to in the mornings at work is Ryan VanAndel, their Finance Officer. After they have squared away what needs to be prioritized and tackled for the day, Berlenbach is ready to get started.

**Comprehensive fleet solutions for a dynamic organization**

Berlenbach is no stranger to the benefits of integrated fleet solutions. Over the decades of experience that he has at various organizations, Berlenbach has picked up a few fleet management tips along the way.

"I am a three time AssetWorks customer," noted Berlenbach, "At all three places, we used FleetFocus, and here in Long Beach we use





FleetFocus (with virtually all modules), EquipmentFocus, FuelFocus with Driver Behavior, SmartApps, and extensive Crystal reporting and dashboards.”

With this spread of fleet management solutions, Berlenbach’s fleet is covered at nearly every angle – recording data, generating reports and providing warnings and notifications of impending maintenance.

Despite the fully integrated nature of his software, Berlenbach recognizes that a fully integrated team is just as essential to the wellbeing and success of the organization.

“We’re a fun group of professionals that is dedicated to serving our customers, to providing efficient, safe, green assets to support their missions,” said Berlenbach. “We try

to focus on making all of the ‘pieces’ of fleet management work most smoothly together.”

He explains that this could include “speccing” out and equipping the right assets, transporting them through the shop on time in a fiscally responsible manner. “To accomplish our team’s mission of moving assets through their lifecycle cleanly, safely, and efficiently... we depend heavily on data and thus emphasize it heavily throughout our operations.”

**Public Sector Fleet Manager of the Year**

In keeping with his servant’s personality, Berlenbach credits anything else besides himself for the 2019 Public Sector Fleet

Manager of the Year win at the

Government Fleet Expo. When asked what he did to win the award, he replied “I don’t know if there are specific decisions, but more likely the ongoing process of continuous improvement... we’re always looking to improve our management of the City’s fleet and we’re always trying new things or revisiting a process and fine-tuning it.”

This mentality of always improving, changing and growing leads the fleet to making radical adjustments and additions, including the wide-reaching integration of their AssetWorks management software. Berlenbach and his fleet also recognize the importance of data, as well as the time-sensitive nature that some datasets possess. With rapid response and appropriate management of this data, important decisions about the





fleet can be made.

Despite his humble nature, a celebration was in order. Since the conference was in New Orleans, Berlenbach recalls that “we may have toasted to this win a few times or so on Bourbon Street.” All the while, thoughts were swirling around in his head to the tune of “what an honor this is... gratitude... and pride for my team.”

**Berlenbach’s commitment to furthering his knowledge of the fleet industry**

In addition to the AssetWorks customer newsletter, Berlenbach reads all of the following publications:

- Government Fleet Magazine (and website articles)
- Automotive Fleet
- Fleet Equipment
- Fleet Maintenance

- Tow Professional
- Police Fleet Manager
- And many more

**At the end of the day**

Before Berlenbach leaves work for the day, he has one last task to complete: preparing for the next day.

“I try to straighten out my desk and my inbox before the next day, as well as plan for the coming day,” he explained, “Though I’ll admit to this being somewhat aspirational at times when the day has been hectic.”

Berlenbach recognizes that the last little bit of inspiration that comes at the end of the workday can be used to help the next day be a little bit more efficient. The “early-morning” version of him that comes in the next day will appreciate the clean desk and inbox.

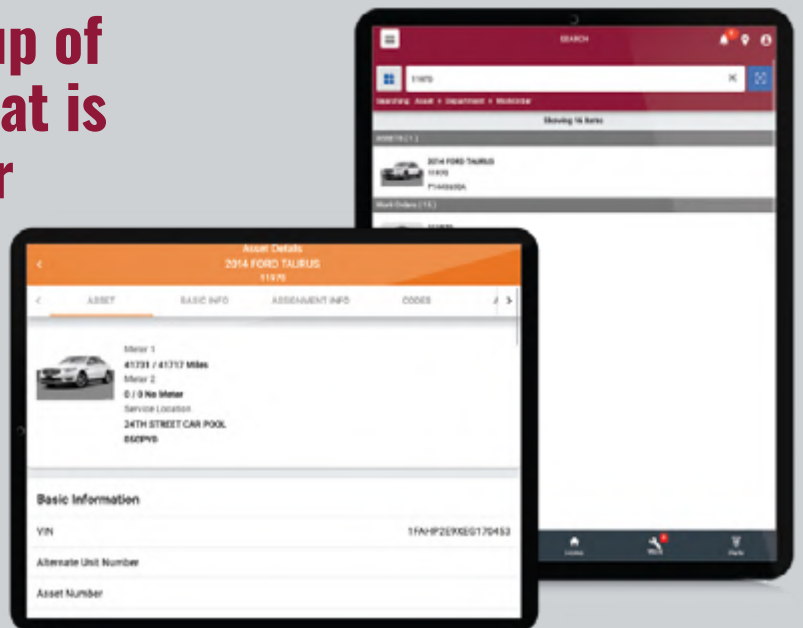
On the way home and into the evening, Berlenbach reflects on his favorite aspects and tasks in his

role. “I enjoy staying abreast of the changes in fleet management and participating in them fully,” he began. “We are a leading fleet and we strive to stay on the front edge of fleet management.”

Much like before, no man is an island, and Berlenbach has built up strong personal and professional relationships to help foster and encourage his growth and development in the fleet industry. “I hold a leadership role in MEMA (Municipal Equipment Maintenance Association) as well as I belong to NAFA,” he noted. “My peers in those associations are invaluable in helping me to stay current and involved with what’s happening in fleet.”

After reflecting on the good that he can do in position, and how much he enjoys helping the customers and the City, he can rest and prepare for the next day.

**“We’re a fun group of professionals that is dedicated to serving our customers, to providing efficient, safe, green assets to support their missions,”**





**A surprising aspect of the job**

Berlenbach explains that one particular facet of the City of Long Beach’s Fleet Services bureau is that they include towing for the City, instead of contracting it out.

“Our Fleet Services bureau at the City of Long Beach includes towing for the City,” he began. “Most cities contract that, instead we have 10 tow trucks, professional operators, and run a lien sale every 2 weeks. Typical fleet organizations do not interact with the general public, but in this case we do, and those customers are generally not pleased about their car being towed!” While it may not always be the most pleasant task for the bureau to run, it ultimately saves the bureau time, money and headaches by avoiding expensive contracts.

There are other aspects of the job that Berlenbach wishes more people knew: “how much fun [the job] is.”

While some people come home exhausted from work and bemoan having to return the next day, Berlenbach sees his position as a thrill – and as an opportunity to share the knowledge that he has. “I love what I do and get great satisfaction from it,” explained Berlenbach. “With decades of experience now, I am able to share quite a bit with my staff and provide solid mentorship.”

True comfort and fulfillment in the job allows Berlenbach to make sure that those who work under him are receiving the attention and knowledge sharing that they deserve to help them grow and be satisfied too.

**Berlenbach’s fleet management evolution**

Since we have been talking about how much Berlenbach and the City of Long Beach have changed, it’s only reasonable to look into the specifics. Berlenbach has a few decades’ worth of years of experience under his belt, so what has he done with it? “Having been in the business for a long time, I have the benefit of looking back at myself as I’ve grown as a leader and as a manager,” he recalled. “It is much easier now to step back and let people do their jobs (i.e., get out of their way!) and only provide guidance and support unless more is needed. I am still hands-on, but much, much less than when I was less experienced and younger. Additionally, I need to give a shout out to the US Air Force where I





learned my trade over 29 years as a heavy equipment mechanic and fleet manager.”

Berlenbach’s decision to let his workers do what they do best has allowed them to thrive, grow and develop professionally, all while helping the City’s fleet reach success. His success and approach to change helped earn him the nomination and ultimate win for 2019 Public Sector Fleet Manager of the Year.

**Berlenbach’s prediction for the future of fleet management**

Not surprisingly, Berlenbach believes data will play a massive role in the successful operation of fleets in the next ten years. “[Fleet management] will become even more data-driven,” he predicted. “I look forward to

seeing those data streams from the vehicles in operation, their scheduling, servicing and fueling, all coming into one business intelligence dataset that enables us to better manage the fleet across the board.” Berlenbach’s prediction comes amid a swarm of articles and products aimed at the exploration of data acquisition, compilation and analysis. Essentially, they ask “we have all of this data – what does it mean? What can we do with it?” The possibilities appear limitless at this time, so maybe in ten more years we’ll have to ask: “what can we do next with data?”

So with all of that in mind, what is Berlenbach’s advice to aspiring Fleet Manager of the Year candidates?

“Learn from those around you, don’t isolate yourself or your fleet. Those in this industry are almost without exception, generous and willing to share. Educate yourself, train your people, empower them, and set aggressive goals. And when recognition comes, remember it’s your people that earned it.”

With his years of experience and drive for data analysis and fleet excellence, it’s no surprise that Berlenbach was the recipient of 2019 Public Sector Fleet Management of the Year award. What fresh ideas and innovative solutions will he bring the City of Long Beach next?



**Want to learn more about the ever-changing, data-driven fleet management industry and software that Dan Berlenbach uses at his fleet? Visit [assetworks.com/fleet](https://assetworks.com/fleet).**