



Simpler, Better

Fewer systems and citizen self-service streamline operations in Long Beach

LONG BEACH is the seventh-largest city in California, with nearly 500,000 residents. Located on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, Long Beach is a vibrant part of Southern California. The Technology Services Department manages the city's IT systems for human resources, financial management, billing/collections, land management, GIS, worker's compensation and numerous other areas.

Technology Services has seen a need to simplify its systems, including its system for community development and regulation (CDR). "We had a legacy system that wasn't supported, so we needed to get off of that from a risk perspective," says Jack Ciulla, manager of Business Information Services for the city. "The previous system didn't have integration with the other systems. So no integration with GIS, cashiering or the city's financial system — those interfaces didn't exist and that was something we wanted to have. In addition, we wanted to consolidate. The city had a large number of departmental-specific systems out there, for different functions. We wanted to go to fewer, enterprise-wide systems that would talk to each other."

Infor Public Sector CDR is a big part of the solution for Long Beach. Along with human resources, financials, utilities and customer information systems, Infor Public Sector CDR is a key part of the city's enterprise-wide foundation. These few systems will replace numerous smaller ones.

The consolidation will provide the city with streamlined processes and better information through less duplication of customer records. Too often in the past, one customer would have accounts in numerous departments. The new system will be more efficient, and more departments will have access to centralized data and processes.

Big Benefits

The city uses Infor Public Sector CDR for code enforcement, fire permits, housing enforcement and permitting for planning and building. It's starting to implement public works permits, and will also use it for health permits, billing and parks.

Ciulla said there have been — and will be — numerous benefits. "I think one of the benefits has been the integration with GIS,"

he notes. "Before, when we had different, standalone systems, we didn't have any integration with GIS, which is our address of record for city addresses. We would often have addresses in some systems that weren't proper addresses, and were different than in other systems."

The city's GIS has valuable data on historical buildings, zoning and other information that simply didn't exist in the permitting system. "That required users to go to a completely different system to look up information, and they were constantly going back and forth between different systems," says Ciulla. "Now that's all integrated together, so when they pull up a permit application, it pulls in all the GIS information they need too."

Ciulla is also excited about the next major release of Infor Public Sector CDR, which will have more GIS-centric features. It will enable the city to get even more out of its GIS.

Consolidated systems will allow the city to process permit and other applications faster. City employees won't need to spend as much time pulling together information from



various sources in order to make decisions on applications.

Infor Public Sector CDR also integrates with the city's centralized cashing system. That integration allows the city to manage its cash intake from various cashiers in a more efficient manner.

Enabling Citizens

Infor Public Sector Dynamic Portal is another tool that will help Long Beach work more efficiently. It brings numerous services directly to the public, so citizens can serve themselves in a fast, convenient way. Long Beach is starting with online service requests and building permits. After that, the city will put many more permits online.

"The goal is to try to put as many as we can online," says Ciulla. "That's the direction we're taking, to make it easier for the citizens and the contractors to do business with the city. So we have a big push to put as much online as possible."

Citizen convenience is a big driver for the city. "Once we get the portal fully rolled out, the public will be able to do business with

the city without having to come to city hall," Ciulla says. "On the permitting side, a lot of the business is being done by contractors, who are doing many projects. And they have to come down here for every single one of them right now. Once they're able to do it online, that's really going to be a benefit to them."

The city has had some of these services online before, but Infor Public Sector Dynamic Portal will allow it to offer even more public services over the Internet. "I think we do a good job of making a lot of things available to the public online, but there's always more we can do," Ciulla observes.

Future plans involve more progress toward consolidation and integration among systems. Mobility, too, will play a larger role in the future. "We eventually want to add mobile capabilities as well, so our field workers and inspectors will have mobile devices that will work with the system," Ciulla says. The goal will be to upload data from the field immediately — adding even more value to the city's consolidated environment.

Conclusion

Government primed for the future

Forward-thinking governments know that siloed, legacy systems stand in the way of efficiency and productivity, which is why many are taking the steps to consolidate enterprise applications and systems. The case studies of Louisville Metro government and the Louisville and Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), and the city of Long Beach, Calif., prove that a sophisticated approach to enabling applications to work together — with the right solution provider — sets government up for greater efficiencies now and even more improvements into the future. That is how Infor is changing the way government work is done.

Endnotes:

1. www.governing.com/topics/public-workforce/Employee-Exodus.html