

Web-based mapping portal improves efficiencies for local governments

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York County, Pa., is home to more than 400,000 people and is ranked as one of the fastest-growing metropolitan regions in the country. In accordance with this growth, the county has incorporated leading-edge technology in a variety of its operations to function more efficiently and effectively.

Recently, the county embarked on a new initiative to update its online tax parcel data. Taking advantage of current technologies, York County has introduced a user-friendly, publicly available mapping application. The goals of this Web-based application were twofold: (1) to implement a user-friendly interface and (2) to maintain compatibility with its existing enterprise geographic information system (GIS). The use of GeoDecisions Public Records Information Mapping Engine satisfied both of York County's goals.

GeoPRIME is a multi-platform configurable framework for used for building easy-to-maintain, low-cost spatial Web applications. Not only did the use of GeoPRIME assist York County with satisfying its two primary goals, but it also aided in facilitating online public requests due to the Pennsylvania Right to Know Act. The Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Act is a series of laws designed to guarantee that the public has access to public records of governmental bodies.

Key information available through the GeoPRIME portal enables the public to gain ready-access to critical information, including tax parcels and floodplains. While a Web-based mapping application does not address all aspects of a Right-to-Know request, it has been extremely helpful for

municipal governments, like York County, to publish readily available information and lessen the burden of government staff workers to individually address basic requests.

Simply put, when more information is published, the lesser the burden on local government, saving time, money, and resources. "This application has given us the ability to provide a wealth of information at a reasonable cost to the county," said Al Raniero, executive director of information technology for York County.

Ensuring compatibility with York County's existing GIS was significant. The county GIS supports a wide range of applications and services, including public safety, transportation,

utilities infrastructure, tax assessment, economic and land use planning, and management of data related to engineering purposes.

York County's GeoPRIME application features a user-friendly console interface for managing the content of the portal. The console takes advantage of the latest technologies, reducing costs and increasing flexibility. The console also includes validation and other safeguards put into place to ensure safe and secure customizations. The administrative tools make it easy to publish new data layers and manage multiple portals of the site simultaneously.

The demand for geographic

information has increased dramatically in recent years, thanks in part to readily available online mapping Web sites like Google Maps and MapQuest. Harrisburg-based GeoDecisions has implemented public mapping Websites for several Pennsylvania counties, including York. These user-friendly and affordable municipal Web sites display property, recreation, and economic development information.

York County's portal is available at: <http://gis.york-county.org/>.

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