Harris County’s Development of an Enterprise Wide Asset Management System
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How do you move the country’s third largest county (by population), larger than 27 states, from what is essentially a very manual, very paper oriented environment to a digital world in terms of Asset Accounting and Asset Management, especially in light of the GASB guidelines? The first steps require self examination. An understanding of existing business processes, work flows and our asset life cycle, from inception through implementation, maintenance and finally asset retirement must be undertaken. Then answer some very difficult questions: How can we maintain our AAA bond rating? How to develop and implement new tools for asset accounting and management within a politically sensitive environment without disrupting current methodologies and encouraging new technologies? All these challenges are underway at Harris County with the initiation of their County Asset Management System (CAMS).
Harris County

- Area = 1778 Square Miles
- Populations = 3,700,000 (3rd most populous county in the US)
- 6400 Miles of Road (in unincorporated Harris County)
- 726 Bridges (in unincorporated Harris County)
- 1020 Buildings (in unincorporated Harris County)
- Between 17000 – 18000 parcels of land (not including Road ROW)
In June 2004, during the Capital Improvements Hearing, Harris County Commissioners’ Court authorized:

“Management Services and PID to develop an asset management system for tracking of infrastructure. Included will be a centralized system for recording all county owned land including historic cost and values. These records will assist the County Auditor in preparation of the county’s financial statements.”
High-level Business Process Assessment

Timeline

1Q 2006

- Business Processes Review & Assessment
- Refine Business case
- Determine program phases
- Technology Evaluation Plan

1Q 2007

- Detailed Business Requirements
- Integration Touch Points & Design
- Technical Design plan

1Q 2008

- Technical Design
- H/W and S/W selections
- Implementation plan
- Development
- Unit Testing
- System Testing
- Usability Testing
- Integration Testing
- Business Acceptance Testing

Mission Plan

Timeline

120 Day Assessment
June 1st

Active ITC Participation
July 1st

1Q 2006

1Q 2007

1Q 2008

System Implementation

System Release

Auditors
Asset Log
GIS
ITC

Precincts
Engineering & Construction
Permits
Right of Way
Administration

- Detailed Business Requirements
- Integration Touch Points & Design
- Technical Design plan

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- Integration Testing
- Business Acceptance Testing

- Pilot
- Test
- Launch

Iterative Process
The management strategy drives processes.

Processes drive applications.

Applications drive technology.

Applications and technology drive the I/T organization structure.
Understanding the Asset Life Cycle in terms of potential electronic development and submittals and how each phase relates the financial allocation and tracking.
CAMS is an exceptionally complex project. Currently there are 57 different tracks being managed as part of this initiative.

On a high level they can be broken down into:

- Asset Inventory
- Auditing Procedures
- Business Processes
- Technology
- System Architecture
- Application Development
- Standards
- Committees

Each Category represent significant numbers of projects and work effort.
Summary:

Asset management should not be viewed, as yet another new program, requiring yet another new bureaucracy.

Rather, asset management is a “way of doing business.”


Questions & Answers