

ENTERPRISE-WIDE SOLUTIONS

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- Kelly Hammill, Public Works Administrator, Milford, Connecticut

Residing an hour north of New York City, just beside the Long Island Sound, one will find the quietly growing community of Milford, Connecticut. One of the oldest cities in the state, Milford is lovingly dubbed as the “Small City with a Big Heart,” calling itself home to over 50,000 people. As a forward-thinking community, Milford has committed itself to providing its population a healthy, safe, and caring environment in which to live. As a result of this commitment, Milford was recently named “One of the 100 Best Communities for Young People” for the second year running.

Like any growing community, Milford is always on the lookout for ways to improve the way of life for its citizens. With an eye for prudent budgeting and a commitment to quality public service, the City of Milford’s Department of Public Works has been a continual component in that effort and source of pride in the community. In 2004, with technology evolving everywhere, and public demand on the rise, Milford Public Works found itself still operating in a basic electronic interface that did little beyond the immediate walls of the Administration office. It was then that Milford finally concluded that it had stretched the capabilities of their “homegrown system” to its limit.



“It was clear that we needed to streamline our operations,” recalls Milford’s longtime Public Works Administrator, Kelly Hammill, “and put some sort of software system in place—one where we could have all of this information centrally gathered.”

Charged with the administration of Milford’s six distinct divisions of Public Works—Highway/Parks, Solid Waste, Building Maintenance, Wastewater, Garage, and Engineers—Ms. Hammill’s office sought a practical solution that would disperse information to the different divisions and, at the same time, provide a way to easily share common data elements among them. Even higher on Hammill’s wish list, though, was a solution that would enable her office to better delegate the duties associated with the ever-present task of

handling residential and inter-departmental requests and complaints. Enter CartêGraph.

Kelly was introduced to the possibilities of CartêGraph solutions by an internal colleague who offered a marketing brochure and a simple question—“Is this something that you think you could use?” After reading about and investigating CartêGraph’s offerings in further detail, the City of Milford began to imagine the possibilities associated with having an enterprise-wide work and asset management interface from which to work. It was shortly thereafter that Hammill and her associates came to the realization that CartêGraph, with its array of varied and customizable options, was exactly the solution for which Milford was looking.

“It was all so tailored toward public works,” continues Hammill, referring to the information she learned about the CartêGraph suite. “We really could not believe that all of these things we needed could possibly be found in this one package.”

The City of Milford moved forward with its integration effort in May of 2004, beginning with what was initially considered as a “test run” of CartêGraph’s *WORKdirector* technology, a customizable interface designed to automate, track, and maintain data on activities, materials, employees and equipment. With the *WORKdirector* tool in hand, Milford quickly noticed a newfound ability to automate and manage those day-to-day activities that are inherent to most any Public Works organization—from an initial request for work to the scheduling of routine maintenance through the completion of a given project. Most notably,

however, Milford finally possessed a long-sought and reliable means of tracking complaint histories against problematic assets—issues whose origins often grew into legal claims against the City.

“With the options in *WORKdirector*, we gained an ability to view the complaint history of, say, pothole activity, and check that information against our tracked maintenance actions,” says Hammill. “Having the option to run a custom report that contains these tracked variables, we found ourselves better equipped to defend against claims by having actual, record-kept information to forward to the insurance company, thereby bolstering the City’s defense.”

Fresh off of the success gained from the *WORKdirector* effort, the City of Milford’s Department of Public Works was inspired to explore further possibilities by adopting other CartêGraph applications. *WORKdirector*’s Fleet extension was added in the Garage Division for the purpose of tracking maintenance activities and manpower invested in the upkeep of many City vehicles. Milford even incorporated a “reminder system” that generates an e-mail to the assigned driver each time fleet vehicle maintenance is due. Now the City had a viable means of maximizing the life of purchased vehicles via regulated maintenance. At the same time, Milford found itself more adept at “weeding out” those vehicles that began to show signs of being problematic, thereby saving dollars and labor hours from being invested for nothing. Following that, the Highway Department integrated the Trees extension for *VERSAtools*, allowing for trees to be accurately inventoried and logged, complete with condition and

accompanying geographical coordinates.

Stories of success and user friendliness eventually made their way beyond the Department of Public Works and into the City's Engineering Division. Here, CartêGraph's SEWERview and STORMview applications were immediately put to use in locating, inventorying, and mapping network points. They were also able to establish background and inspection histories of sewer systems, storm networks, and their associated assets. With this tracked information in hand, Milford engineers have been better able to forecast yearly budgets, anticipate maintenance, and address regulation concerns regarding lines, mains, access points, manholes, and pipes.

"So many departments can share information," says Hammill, "it's just really remarkable."

And it hasn't stopped there. In addition to Milford's

Wastewater Division, who hopes to become more directly involved with the CartêGraph suite in the near future, Milford's Health Department recently came into the fold, utilizing the flexTECHNOLOGY aspects of VERSAtools to create custom applications that automate and manage the workflow requirements that are unique to their particular area.

In reflecting on the City's decision to integrate the CartêGraph suite of solutions, Hammill can no longer picture her workflow technology any other way. "It's our own daily planner," she adds, referring again to WORKdirector, "It's integral to the function of the Public Works department, and we'd be lost without it."

When asked about what's next for the City of Milford, Hammill herself is curious, "There's just so much room for growth with this package; I guess we'll see."