

Affordable, Accessible and Totally Integrated GIS

City of Bend, Oregon



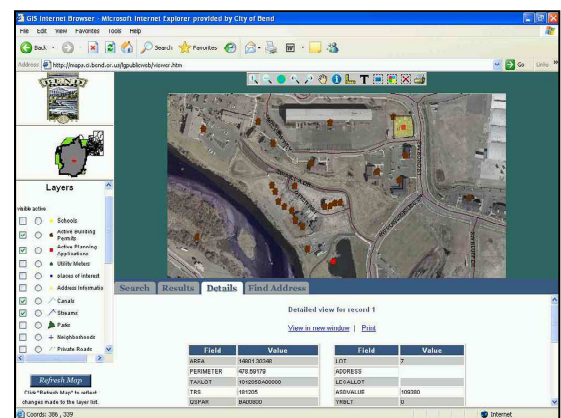
The City of Bend, Oregon, is usually among the first to jump on new technologies, always bringing cutting edge applications to its employees and citizens. But with GIS, IT Director Steve Meyers decided to hang back and wait for the technology to mature.

When he first saw a demonstration of Geographic Technologies Group's LG products, he knew it was time to take the plunge. "Over the years I've seen a lot of municipalities make presentations on GIS applications they've developed and I've been impressed. But I was even more impressed by the investments they were making. I knew, for us, that was just not affordable. And, the training required to use those complicated applications meant the technology would only be accessible to a handful of employees.

"I would hear people talking about how to extract the data, how to overlay databases, how to connect users, how to make sure you had multiple copies of each database and which processes needed to run overnight. It seemed like a lot of work to figure out all those details, like people were reinventing the wheel. Way too labor intensive. For us, that was not an option.

"I remember thinking there had to be a better way. LG proved me right." Meyers loved the fact that you didn't have to be an expert to use LG applications that it wouldn't take an IT person full-time to administer them, and most of all, that you could use the data you had spent years collecting.

"I thought: this is it. This is what I've been waiting for. Here's a way I can give GIS functionality to all of the City's employees, not just a few, and no one needs GIS training to use it." Bend began with LGviewer, liked what it did, and added LGweb so all employees could use the program. In the past 30 days, the City has deployed LGpublic Web.



LGPublic Web

"We've just announced to the public that the service is available so we haven't gotten much reaction yet, but our internal users are excited that the citizens can now do a lot of their own research. A lot of times the citizens are calling us and we are reading off our screens. Now that they're able to get that same information on the Internet, we can move on to other things."

Meyers said citizens call to find out what Planning and Zoning projects are active in their neighborhoods, what building permits have been issued, how close the nearest school or park is to a house they're considering buying, or which neighborhood association they are zoned for.

"All of those searches are now available on the Web."

In Bend, City leaders are always thinking about what's next.

"This whole process is user-driven," Meyers said. "As soon as we get something up and running and people learn how useful it is, they'll say, 'this is nice, but it would be even nicer if we could do this,' and we're on to the next enhancement. It's a very exciting time." High on City Managers' wish lists is giving GIS access to workers in the field. "They want AVL," Meyers said. "I just met with our Public Works managers and they want AVL in each vehicle and they want the drivers to be able to send geographic data back from the field.

"The question managers always have is 'where are my vehicles?' For someone managing snow plows, knowing where they've been for the past four hours means knowing what parts of the city have been cleared, and where extra help might be needed. The technology can also allow our drivers to give us valuable feedback about situations throughout the city they run across that need our attention," he said.

For example, the driver of a street sweeper may notice during the night that a storm drain is plugged. From the laptop in his vehicle, he could enter the x/y coordinates of the drain, send a work order, and enter notes on exactly what needs to be done. When the street crew comes in the next morning, the work order would be waiting for them.

Meyers recently did a presentation on his use of LG products to a group at the HTE-Sungard User Group (HUG).

"We logged onto our own network and did the presentation live. I think we were able to show people how much you can accomplish without a huge budget. I know cities that have spent millions on GIS with no more functionality than we have here. You don't have to do the math to know we did the right thing by waiting," Meyers said.

Geographic Technologies Group

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