

Ormond Beach Experiences the "Wow Factor" with GIS



Ormond Beach, Florida, is less than six miles from the world famous Daytona Speedway and clearly, the two have one thing in common: things move very fast. In fact, city officials are so quick to adopt new technology that Ormond Beach is a frequent beta site for new applications.

"Nothing stays the same here for very long," said Jackie Carkhuff, the city's accounting manager, "and we don't let anything stand in the way of change and progress. We've been through staff changes, Y2K, even four hurricanes last year, and we're still moving forward. I love being first with new products because I get a chance to influence their development." Carkhuff said that many years ago, her superiors and coworkers learned to brace themselves when she returns from a technology conference. "I always come home with a long wish list."

Three years ago, she learned about GTG's suite of LG products, and LGviewer and LGaddress were at the top of her list. "We put together a huge project using LGviewer and LGaddress to develop and clean up our bidirectional address database. We had such great success with those products that we're now ready to move forward with LGpublicWeb and LGkiosk, two other GTG products." Building the address database proved to be a monumental task.



LGpublicWeb

"I have been working for the city since the days before we used computers at all, and I have been involved in every phase of installing new hardware and software, so I understand the files and how they relate to each other. That turned out to be a big help when we started to put our GIS plan together."

Carkhuff said LGviewer gave the staff the ability to be able to clearly see where things were on the map

and to spot inconsistencies more readily. "Being able to scrub visually from a map is a big advantage. We're aiming for 100 percent accuracy in our addresses, and I'm confident we'll get there. The data is so critical to the success of GIS."

She said city engineers have embraced the applications and have worked diligently to develop the GIS layers. "They are the heart and soul of the project and they do whatever it takes to get it right."

"I can't say enough good things about the LG products," said Clyde Harris, the IT Director in the city's Information Technology Department. "I love the feature that spots problems before we do and automatically reports them to GTG. It's not uncommon for GTG to see errors and correct them before we even notice there's a problem. For IT, these are easy products to install and support."

With the addressing project well on its way to completion, Ormond Beach is moving on to the next big GIS project: going public. "When we realized how successful the LG applications were and how they had revolutionized the way we were able to do our jobs, we began to see the possibilities of rolling these out for public use. We are super excited about LGkiosk and LGpublicWeb. Why not let our citizens get the information they need directly? I want people to be able to access information from wherever they are—from their home, from the library, or from inside our offices."

Carkhuff said she can depend on GTG products to deliver what she calls the "wow factor."

“GIS has the power to ignite people’s imaginations and make them feel good about their work,” she said. “I remember doing a demo for the city manager, and when we were finished, he just sat back and said ‘wow.’ It’s great to show people the power of technology. GIS just blows people away.” Carkhuff stresses that well designed software is not just a pleasure for the user, but for those supporting the applications as well.

“Sometimes people think a nice interface is window dressing, but in reality, an elegant application frees the IT people for more important work. There’s no need to have a programmer available all the time if the software does its job. You just sit back and enjoy the ride—which is exactly what we’ve done with GTG.”



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