

MapTouch Public Terminals Save Wayne County Time and Money

Wayne County, North Carolina

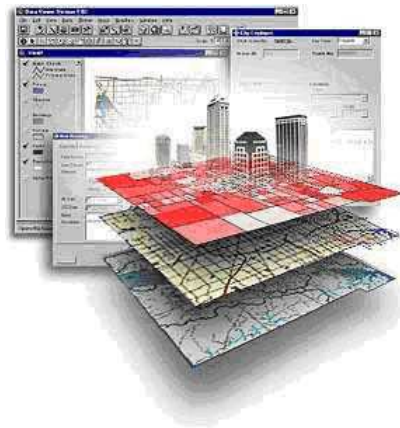


Wayne County, North Carolina, is a study in contrasts.

Located just 50 miles east of Raleigh, the county is considered rural but sits a stone's throw away from one of America's most sophisticated scientific enclaves: the state's famed Research Triangle, where many of the county residents work.

And, while the signs of Wayne County's riveting history are everywhere—Revolutionary and Confederate War battle sites, steamboats that once sailed the Neuse River—it's not uncommon to see a futuristic-looking F-15E Strike Eagle from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base fly overhead.

So it shouldn't be surprising that residents of Wayne County, who choose to live there for the quiet, unhurried lifestyle, also love the fact that their government is second to none in its commitment to deliver the most progressive technology available to make citizen service convenient, fast and efficient.



Wayne County has been ahead of the technology curve for many years. Its well articulated goals include making Internet access available within a 10 minute drive to all of its citizens, an ambitious plan for a rural county. County leaders believe online connectivity is one of the keys to achieving a higher standard of living and personal fulfillment.

"We talk often about making Wayne County a fully connected e-community because we believe it will make it a better place to live and raise our children," said David Ward, the county's tax administrator. "The Triangle has been booming for years and people are migrating towards us. We definitely are feeling the effects of a tech-savvy population."

Ward says community leaders know their citizens are forward-thinking and sophisticated but have settled in Wayne County to break free of the busy pace found in larger communities. They expect technology to enhance their quality of life and support growth opportunities for the community and its businesses.

With annual revenues of \$55 million, the Tax Department is one of the most accessible county departments, thanks to its use of Geographic Technologies Group's MapTouch, a solution which provides information via public terminals.

MAPTOUCH, based on ESRI's MapObjects, is perfect for public access to GIS data and Web pages. It allows the public to access information on business or individual property locations such as day care centers, schools, and other public facilities, to acquire tax information.

"We've been using MapTouch for several years now and we've had great luck with it," Ward said. "It's an important part of our plan to open government to the citizens. It's very user friendly and it's used all day, every day by our citizens."

Ward said regular users include attorneys, paralegals and real estate professionals, but it's easy for a first-time user to pick it up with little instruction. "It takes no time at all for our staff to teach someone how to use it. The staff loves MapTouch, too, because it saves them so much time. Our primary goal for MapTouch was to provide better access for our citizens, but our secondary goal was to free our staff to do other work and it's done both really well."

GIS has been an accepted technology in Wayne County as long as most of its employees can remember and GTG has been a valued partner since the beginning.

“GTG is located here in Wayne County,” Ward said, “and we have a great relationship. “We keep close tabs on what they have in development so we can be among the first to take advantage of new technology.”

Early GIS efforts in Wayne County focused on data collection and mapping infrastructure but quickly progressed to developing property and tax maps, then to applications used by the Planning, Environmental Health, Inspections, Voter Registration and the Sheriff’s departments.

“We have lots of needs,” Ward said. “Once you get maps in digital form, you can bring so many departments and so many functions on line.”

The County is currently working with GTG to update its GIS plan. “We’re trying to attract more businesses and industry, and we want to help our families harness the internet to improve their lives and their businesses, and any tools that can help us do that are welcome. I can remember when our revenues were only \$20 million dollars, and it wasn’t that long ago. GIS technology has helped us make that transition smoothly,” he said.



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