

Docstar Linked with GIS Software at Chester Co. Conservation District

Pennsylvania environmental organization cuts retrieval time from hours to seconds... Solution's map-based interface is easy to use for non-technical workers.

The Chester County, Pa. Conservation District has integrated a docSTAR™ imaging system with an industry leading geographic information system (GIS) software product in a powerful, but easy-to-use records management solution that has dramatically accelerated the organization's access to critical information.

"The Chester County system demonstrates how the value of docSTAR - speed, simplicity and efficiency - can be maximized through seamless integration with a critical business application," said Thomas Franceski, docSTAR president. "Integration can provide users with fingertip access to our imaging system's powerful document management capabilities in a transparent, end-to-end process that doesn't interrupt their everyday work."

According to District officials, this solution has increased operational efficiency and responsiveness, helping the organization to fulfill its mission of providing civic leadership in land use and conservation for this county of 433,000 people.

The solution links powerful search and retrieval capabilities of the imaging system from docSTAR, a division of AuthentiDate Holding Corp. (NASDAQ: ADAT), with ArcMap (ArcView version 8.1), GIS and mapping software from ESRI, the world leader in GIS technology with more than one million users. This is the first such integration of docSTAR with a customer line of business application, and the company is actively pursuing many others.

ArcMap provides a simple graphical interface showing a map of Chester County through which District staff - primarily non-technical users - can locate documents quickly. Within the visual interface, plots of land where the county is actively processing required documentation are color-coded on the map. Users click the computer mouse on a desired plot, which automatically displays a list of all related documents in the case file; with one more click, users can view any specific document.

District officials say that the docSTAR-GIS solution has slashed the amount of time needed for information retrieval and management reporting compared with paper-based document management. Response to requests for information has been reduced from as much as three days to less than five minutes.

"The system is a faster, more efficient way to run our business," explained Daniel J. Greig, district manager. "We used to spend hours at a time just chasing paper, which meant that it would take about a half day just to find the information necessary to compile a report on our basic business activities. Now, we get a quick

visual view of where our information is, and we can do the same report in less than a half-hour from start to finish.

"The map-based interface also has made it very easy for our people, who aren't computer experts, to use the system immediately without extra training," he added.

The Chester County Conservation District worked with Yerkes Associates, a civil engineering firm based in West Chester, PA, and ImageNet, a docSTAR Business Partner based in Exton, PA, to develop and implement the solution. Yerkes has been in business since 1874 providing civil engineering, land surveying, and other services to Pennsylvania municipalities. ImageNet has been a docSTAR partner since 1999 and has been especially successful promoting docSTAR to local government.

Archive Holds Over 400,000 Pages

The docSTAR-GIS solution addresses the District's need to manage an archive of approximately 400,000 pages of information in over 2,000 case files, all of which must be maintained for up to five years. Many of the documents come in large-formats, such as blueprints of development plans.

At any given time, the District's staff of 18 people manages a portfolio of about 200 active cases, the contents of which must be frequently referenced, modified and appended. New paper-based documents can be scanned easily into the docSTAR system, where the information can be retrieved through the GIS interface.

With recent changes in environmental regulations, District managers estimate that this volume of documents likely will triple. They believe that the docSTAR-GIS solution will help the organization keep pace with this anticipated growth without significant increases in either staff or budget.

In addition to reducing access time, the solution has enabled the District to cut costs by eliminating 600 sq. ft. of space previously need to store paper documents. After scanning documents into the docSTAR system, the organization employs that product's innovative AuthentiDate technology to create irrefutable electronic evidence of each document's authenticity. This feature enables the organization to discard all of the paper without concern for the integrity of its records system to meet the requirements of future audits.