



Coordinating street projects saves California county money

SECTOR *Public Works*
INDUSTRY *Government*

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Sacramento County's Public Works Department GIS developed an Intranet-based application using ArcIMS that improved communication within the department. By coordinating street work, the county consolidated projects—saving both time and money. Readily accessible information and proactive notification, two features of the Project Coordination application, helped managers make better decisions. The county also created Parcel Viewer, Mailing List Generator, and Sewer Infrastructure Viewer applications. These applications and several other applications in development will eventually be available to the public via the Internet.

How does a government agency provide real-time project information and service to employees and the public? Have you ever driven through a neighborhood and noticed the same street dug up several times in a short period? Or have you ever found a freshly overlaid street being trenched?

Organizational silos remain pervasive, despite the re-engineering trends of the 1990s. Cross-organizational communication typically remains secondary to immediate project responsibilities. In

addition, the fiber optics boom created a backlog of construction projects and a stockpile of planning and development studies. Staffing shortages in engineering and planning organizations add to the problem.

Sacramento County found a solution in the Street Excavation in Right-of-Way (SEROW) application of ArcIMS. This Web-based coordination tool enables users to produce maps of current and planned projects that involve street excavation in the right-of-way and perform spatial and tabular queries for reports. Engineers, planners, developers, utilities, governing boards, and the public use this application.

The application includes powerful online tools to create and maintain project data and an automated e-mail notification process that tracks project data status. If someone creates conflicting data, the application triggers an automated e-mail to contacts listed for the affected projects.

Sacramento County put SEROW on its Intranet for anyone with a browser and a network connection. Users access project data through spatial and tabular searches. To access data via a spatial search, users zoom and pan to the geographic area of interest, trigger the rendering of projects, and click on a project to open a new window that presents a tabular display of project

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data. To access data via a tabular search, users open the project search screen and define search criteria.

An organization must commit staff to maintain project data using the online administration tools, but the return on investment quickly justifies the minimum required efforts. It would cost about \$10,000 for an associate-level engineer to update every project record in the SEROW database in one year. That compares to about \$20,000 to overlay a short residential cul-de-sac in Sacramento County. Preventing one unnecessary cul-de-sac overlay in

Sacramento County more than justifies the cost. Imagine the tremendous savings when the application prevents duplicate work on a large-scale project.

Besides monetary savings, other significant benefits of this application include improved communication and coordination among government agencies, developers, and utilities; reduction in public inconvenience; and enhanced customer service. ○



Coordinating street work with GIS within Sacramento County helps to consolidate projects and save time and money.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

