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REALSOLUTIONS
COUNTY GOVERNMENT



GENESEE COUNTY, NEW YORK

TREASURER'S OFFICE IMPROVES SERVICE BY REDUCING PAPER-BASED PROCESSES WITH ECM

Located in the Greater Niagara Region of western New York, Genesee County has placed a high importance on strategic policy for land and constituent management since its earliest days as part of the Holland Purchase. Today, with a population of just under 60,000, Genesee County strives to continue to make the community a better place for both its constituents and visitors to the area, located between Niagara Falls and the Finger Lakes.

With document retention laws that require the Genesee County Treasurer's Office to keep its large volumes of payroll documents from six to 55 years and its tax documents indefinitely, the county needed to find an enterprise content management (ECM) solution to electronically help manage its records storage. The storage issues contributed to both increased time needed for employees to retrieve documents and also to a growing number of misfiled and damaged documents, which presented customer service issues that would only be compounded as time went on. In addition, an ECM solution would help to manage all of the Treasurer's Office fiscal records, payroll, tax collection and cash management documents. In order to alleviate these issues as well as reduce considerable costs for printing and storage, Genesee County began the discovery for a solution.

Because the county is beholden to its tax payers to act in the best interests of its constituents, finding an economical solution that proved immediately effective was paramount; before looking at solutions, Genesee County applied for and received a Business Process Analysis Grant from the New York State Archives. The county then hired a consultant to conduct a business process analysis of the Treasurer's Office and subsequently modified the county's record management policies to include the validity of electronic records, recognizing that an ECM solution would address many of the process improvements desired, including record retention scheduling functionality for documents stored within the system.

Genesee County next obtained a grant for Imaging and Document Management from the New York State Archives, which allowed the county to move forward and send out a request for proposal (RFP) to find an ECM vendor. Genesee County selected OnBase—offered by Continuum Voice and Data Systems of Syracuse, NY, an Authorized OnBase Solution Provider—for its solution. Developed by Hyland Software Inc., OnBase is an integrated suite of ECM software solutions, including core capabilities in document imaging, electronic document management, workflow, COLD/ERM and records management.

TAX DOCUMENTS ELECTRONICALLY STORED, PAPER STORAGE REDUCED

The Treasurer's Office is responsible for the county's fiscal management, including AP, cash receipts, tax bills, tax bill collection and payroll. Tax roll documents, the source of tax bills for the county, contain assessments of all properties that are subject to taxation in Genesee County and are printed annually for the 13 towns in the county. Before the OnBase solution was implemented, three copies of each approximately 200 to 400 page tax roll document needed to be printed; two copies of each document were sent to the town, and one was kept at the Treasurer's Office. When the towns returned the tax roll documents, containing added information such as paid stamps, all copies were stored as permanent records, contributing to a large volume of storage that was becoming increasingly inefficient to manage. Tax bills, consisting of approximately 22,000 pages per year were also stored as paper copies.

Besides the exponentially growing storage requirements, the turnaround time for finding documents upon request was not optimal. In addition, the risk of misfiled or damaged documents was high, which contributed to customer service issues that inherently would occur more frequently as the number of paper documents stored grew, but the staff did not.

AT A GLANCE

Genesee County, N.Y. Treasurer's Office improves customer service by dramatically reducing the printing, transportation and storage of documents for the Treasurer's Office, and increases efficiencies by automating document retention and eliminating paper storage for nearly 50,000 payroll and tax documents, annually.

BENEFITS

- Improves internal and external customer service with double-click access to all supporting documentation instantly from tax roll documents and payroll reports
- OnBase/New World interoperability capitalizes on existing investments in payroll infrastructure, minimizes change
- Automated record retention scheduling for documents
- Complies with New York State Archives and Records Administration requirements
- Reduced retrieval time of tax roll documents to seconds, from previous wait time of several hours to several days
- Capitalizes on efficiencies gained from best-in-class and fiscally responsible implementation obtained with grants for Business Process Analysis and Imaging and Document Management from the New York State Archives
- Electronically enables existing workflows, providing audit trails and visibility

APPLICATION

- Treasurer's Office
- Records
- Tax Bills/Tax Rolls

COMPLEMENTARY PRODUCT INTEGRATIONS

- New World Systems® interoperability
- New York Real Property System (RPTS) interoperability
- IBM AS/400, Model 820
- Fujitsu Computer Products of America M4097D scanners equipped with Kofax® VRS® Professional software

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The OnBase implementation for tax documents mitigates the paper produced by electronically processing and storing all tax roll documents produced annually. Using OnBase COLD/ERM, tax roll reports are imported into OnBase from the New York Real Property System (RPTS) report as individual documents and assigned appropriate keywords. Only two copies of tax roll documents are printed and sent to the individual towns. After the towns return the completed tax roll documents (one copy only) they are scanned into OnBase as renditions of the original copies. OnBase security provides the ability to limit the rendition users see based upon internal department user group rights.

If there is a question about a tax roll document, it is instantly retrievable, compared with a lag time of several hours to several days it used to take to go to the physical location where the tax roll document was stored, locate it and then re-file it. In addition, all supporting documents, including tax bills, are cross-referenced to line items in the tax roll document reports, providing employees instant access to supporting documents with a simple double-click.

Tax bills are also imported into OnBase using Fujitsu Computer Products of America M4097D scanners. The tax bills contain a bar code with the Master Parcel ID number assigned from the RPTS system and upon scan, the bar code applies the primary keyword value to the electronic document. An OnBase AutoFill Keyword Set automatically applies the remaining secondary keywords values, virtually eliminating the risk of indexing errors.

PAPER STORAGE OF NEARLY 50,000 PAYROLL AND TAX DOCUMENTS ELIMINATED ANNUALLY

By scanning paper documents into OnBase and capturing New World payroll system reports as full-text searchable reports and documents, Genesee County eliminated paper storage for almost 50,000 paper documents per year in just payroll and tax documents alone. The county record retention is automatically managed by OnBase Document Retention; retention policies dictate document purging according to document type classification. Because electronic documents are not recognized by the state of New York as a permanent record, the county burns all records to CD using the

OnBase CD Authoring module, which meets the New York State Archives and Records Administration Guidelines for Ensuring the Long Term Accessibility and Usability of Records stored as Digital Images.

INCREASED PAYROLL PRODUCTIVITY AND VISIBILITY

Electronic access provides a considerable service and time improvement in the Treasurer's Office, especially for a staff of only four clerks who, in addition to the tax document processing, handle AP processing, cash receipt transactions and all payroll for the county.

“Because of the OnBase success in the Treasurer’s Office, the next groups to be rolled out are extremely excited.”

**- Deborah Kovach
Director
Information Technology**

The Treasurer’s Office uses OnBase COLD/ERM to process approximately 1,300 payroll report pages per month, importing the reports directly from New World into OnBase instead of just printing them out. The electronic reports have a higher value than paper as each report is easily retrievable using its assigned OnBase keywords, and report contents are fully text searchable.

The overarching change in procedures requiring employees to perform research using OnBase documents instead of paper took some getting used to, but employees adapted quickly to the paperless environment, as they easily find information when it is needed. “OnBase is really easy to use,” affirms Deborah Kovach, Director of Information Technology. She continues, “We’ve had no complaints. The versatility of the system was a major deciding factor in why we selected OnBase for our solution.”

FUTURE PLANS

Genesee County is looking to implement the OnBase solution enterprise-wide, including further enhancing operations in the Treasurer's Office. Future plans for the Treasurer's Office include using OnBase and New World interoperability to facilitate a shared services approach to AP. Approximately 1,800 to 2,100 invoices are generated per month (each invoice consisting of 1 to 20 pages) and six AP reports per month (approximately 600 pages).

The Treasurer's Office plans to use OnBase COLD/ERM to store check payment information entered into New World, eliminating two-thirds of the paper currently printed for approximately 400 receipts generated per year.

In addition, the Treasurer's Office wants to cross-reference all AP supporting documents to the invoice numbers in electronic reports, providing the ability for employees to instantly retrieve the corresponding invoice, vouchers for payment, corresponding purchase orders, checks and any other supporting documentation simply by double-clicking a report's invoice number. Currently, supporting documents are located by using the invoice number or vendor number to find needed documents. Additionally, the Treasurer's Office would like employees to be able to view totals for payroll and tax bills directly in OnBase. Because OnBase provides overlay templates that mimic the look of the printouts produced from New World, electronic invoices generated directly from the New World data stream in OnBase will match the look and feel of current county documents, encouraging continuity when transitioning from the old process to the new.

“Because of the OnBase success in the Treasurer’s Office, the next groups to be rolled out [Sheriff’s Department, Public Defender’s Office, District Attorney and Probation Office] are extremely excited,” Kovach confirms.



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