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Information at work.



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GOING GREEN WITH ECM

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The EF5 twister destroyed 95 percent of the town. City fathers decided to rebuild green, and that went far beyond document management as well as buildings.

HOW GREENSBURG, BECAME



LEVELED BY A MONSTER TORNADO, THIS HEARTLAND COMMUNITY REBUILT GREEN—AND PAPERLESS—BY EMBRACING ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

IN ILLUSTRATING THE STATE OF THE ENTERPRISE content management (ECM) industry, a common analogy portrays the convergence of information growth and business demands as a “perfect storm.” However, for the inhabitants of a small Kansas farming town, the impact of a real storm created the perfect opportunity for a remarkable revival rooted in green technology and ECM.

KANSAS

GREENTOWN, USA



On May 4, 2007, a massive twister ravaged Greensburg, Kansas, devastating the lives and community of more than 1,500 residents. The tragic storm, classified as the most severe possible (scoring a “5” on the Enhanced Fujita scale), took the lives of 11 people and reduced this Midwestern landscape to rubble and tree stumps. In the aftermath, officials declared 95 percent of the city destroyed.

WINDS OF CHANGE

Prior to the tornado, Greensburg held international recognition for “The Big Well,” the largest hand-dug well in the world. A massive undertaking for its time, the well’s construction coincided with the establishment of the town in 1886, which played a vital role in the westward expansion of the Santé Fe and Rock Island Railroads. A successful turnaround for Greensburg would require more than simple hand tools, however, and the leadership of the community knew this far before the tornado touched ground in 2007. In an attempt to reverse four decades of steady decline, Steve Hewitt, city administrator, and former Mayor Lonnie McCollum had already devised a strategy to renovate the tired town into a vibrant center for new business and a 21st century economy.

As a result of the tornado, the previously drafted plans quickly formed the foundation for a disaster recovery plan, with the core of the initiatives focused

ful of what future generations will need to keep Greensburg successful.”

Through promoting itself as a sustainable community, Greensburg seeks to develop a region where the quality of life creates vast potential for social and economic development, as well as the environment. As part of its efforts to implement green standards for new construction, the United States Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Rating System continues to play a major role in nearly two dozen new building projects in Greensburg, from residential homes to public facilities such as the hospital, the courthouse, and businesses, including banks and retail stores. Several buildings are certified LEED® Platinum, the highest ranking available from the USGBC.

In advancing the use of renewable resources, Greensburg’s energy plan also includes projects for wind, solar, methane or natural gas, as well as the production of biofuels and LED street lighting, which is 40 percent more efficient than traditional fixtures and also prevents nighttime light pollution by focusing light downward onto the street.

BULLDOZERS, BENEVOLENCE...AND A DIGITAL DOCUMENT SOLUTION

In the past two year, fleets of bulldozers, backhoes, and machinery, as well as the collective minds of students, professionals, and citizens helped hoist the city back onto its feet, joining forces with individuals, organizations, and companies from across the country inspired to help.

Frito-Lay’s Sun Chips division funded a business incubator with retail space to help companies return to work. Various schools and universities, including the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and The University of Colorado contributed designs and ideas for innovative buildings, including eco-homes and even prototype green buildings of the future. The Discovery Network’s Planet Green and Leonardo DiCaprio also teamed up to produce a television program to document Greensburg’s rebirth.

The dramatic comeback story reached as far as Weston, Fla., where Cari Ramos, a technology consultant with document management solutions provider Imaging101, read about the green endeavors and became compelled to contribute. Ramos, a passionate advocate for both ECM systems

“GREENSBURG ISN’T BUILDING A COMMUNITY FOR THE NEXT 20-30 YEARS. GREENSBURG IS MAKING 100 YEAR DECISIONS. YOU BUILD A TOWN THINKING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

on a strategy of sustainable growth. “It was important to include our entire community in the planning process,” said Hewitt. “Out of this tragedy, we were provided with a truly unique opportunity to rebuild our city in a way that will meet our current needs while also being mind-



Imaging 101 President Jacob Russo pays Greensburg City Treasurer Pam Reves a visit, testing out the new paperless workflow system that employs Imaging 101 software and a KODAK i420 Scanner.

and the environment, recognized how a paperless digital document management solution would help the city strengthen its sustainable model for growth.

If not for a massive walk-in safe, most of Greensburg's municipal records, files, and documents may have been lost to the tornado. That was the good news. But Pam Reves, Greensburg's city treasurer, understood firsthand the challenges associated with organizing and managing the large volume of information stored on paper. Reves explains how Greensburg relied upon document-based processes to keep its government running. The city used a blizzard of documents to administer various regulations and components surrounding its utilities including water, sewer, electricity and waste. Paper records also played a central role in managing ordinances and zoning standards. Since 1980 there have been more than 100 ordinances that are regularly accessed by city officials.

Much like the debris left behind by the path of the tornado, however, sifting through boxes of documents posed a major challenge to Greensburg officials, given the limited resources available to the staff. For instance, in the redevelopment of the city's infrastructure, various zoning changes required an exhaustive review by multiple

parties of hard-copy documents. For city administrators like Hewitt, this translated into a wasteful use of taxpayers' dollars and counterintuitive to becoming more sustainable and responsible.

To meet the current and future needs of Greensburg, Imaging101 and Kodak donated the necessary technology components and developed a comprehensive strategy to shift the town's paper-based processes into a fully digital workflow. To help make the transition to an electronic-based system easy for Greensburg, Ramos and her team based the new procedures on the same basic elements of the paper-based system, applying the imaging and document management technology where appropriate.

The new system replicated old retrieval systems through the creation of several electronic filing cabinets used to process and store records related to ordinances, resolutions, city administration, city meetings, accounting, and other city documents.

With Imaging101 Software and a KODAK i420 Scanner, Greensburg now

can work together around clean energy to rebuild and improve their community.

ernment for rapid recovery from future natural disasters. "The strategies behind our green focus are rooted in moving forward smarter practices that will work hand-in-hand with creating a more sustainable community," said Hewitt. "The implementation of a paperless digital workflow technology supports our overall mission to utilize highly efficient, effective ways to lower operating costs and get our city organized and on track for growth."

GREENSBURG: "A GLOBAL EXAMPLE"

Through the use of digital information, Greensburg is eliminating the waste and redundancy created by paper-driven processes. It has strengthened and enhanced its community, leaving a smaller footprint on the environment and freeing up resources for other critical needs.


In an address to a joint session of Congress, President Barack Obama earlier this year commended Greensburg as an inspirational and global example of how people

"THE STRATEGIES BEHIND OUR GREEN FOCUS ARE ROOTED IN MOVING FORWARD SMARTER PRACTICES THAT WILL WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY"

captures digital versions of preexisting paper documents into a new electronic database. In addition to eliminating the need for filing cabinets and creating space savings, the automated processes are also enabling Greensburg to accelerate filing and searching for critical documents. Search and retrieval is quick and easy. Specific information can be identified and indexed within minutes. In addition, errors are less likely since data stored within Imaging101 will not require re-filing. Imaging101 also expects that the new system will prevent further paper consumption, as electronic documents can be transmitted via email or shared across a server.

Reves expects that the new ECM system will decrease the city's paper consumption by half and that staff will spend considerably less time searching for documents. The digitally based solution will also help to prepare the municipal gov-

can work together around clean energy to rebuild and improve their community. While Greensburg's dire circumstances following the tornado left a unique opportunity to reinvent itself, its leadership in green and innovative technologies can be applied in less critical scenarios as well.

More than just a "green model," Greensburg's story provides a growth model that demonstrates how smart, strategic decisions can result in new investment opportunities. More than ever, it is crucial to anticipate long-term considerations for building success for any business, community or organization. As Hewitt often says, "Greensburg isn't building a community for the next 20-30 years. Greensburg is making 100 year decisions. You build a town thinking of future generations." 

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