hidalgo county information technology

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CIO's Corner

It has been a busy first quarter in the IT Department. We have implemented several new security features on our County network, we have added an additional 26 sites to the network, we are working to automate manual processes in a County Precinct Office, we are working to integrate GIS services on a county-wide basis, and we have begun the transition to a state-of-the art court and justice management system. Next on our department's agenda is to tackle ways to contribute to Hidalgo County's "Go Green" campaign. Look for more information in the coming months.

Renán A. Ramirez
Chief Information Officer

Hidalgo County District & County Clerks and Court Coordinators Attend Odyssey Meeting at the IT Department on March 11, 2009.

Hidalgo County "On-Track" with Odyssey

Phase I – Civil Case Management Leads Transition to New System

Over the last few months, the IT Department's Odyssey Project Team has been hard at work in laying the groundwork for ensuring a smooth transition to the county-wide new court/justice management system. Cleaning data, merging codes, and taking care of logistics have been part of tasks that the Project Team has begun undertaking as part of this transition.

In addition, the Project Team has created an entity to oversee the multi-year implementation of Odyssey. The Odyssey Project Review Board will direct the oversight and implementation of the project and ensure its objectives are being consistently met on a timely basis.

The Project Review Board will guide the Project Team in key decisions that will need to be addressed during the course of this project, and will have the final authority on change orders and escalation processes, in the event they cannot be resolved by the Project Team.

The Project Review Board will also serve to promote the overall project objectives and accomplishments to other involved entities, including but not limited to, Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court, Hidalgo County Board of Judges, Texas Council of Urban Counties (CUC), and the general public.

Odyssey Project Review Board Members	
Hon. Mario Ramirez	332nd District Judge
Hon. Noe Gonzalez	370th District Judge
Hon. Laura Hinojosa	District Clerk
Hon. Arturo Guajardo	County Clerk
Chief Anacleto Martinez	Sheriff's Office
Mr. Valde Guerra	Commissioners' Court Executive Officer

this issue

Precinct 1 IQ Project **P.2**

Odyssey Civil Transition Committee **P.2**

GIS Integration Project **P.3**

WIC Added to County Network **P.4**

Spotlight On:

Multimedia Department

It's a one-man show for the County's multimedia coordinator, John Carlos Treviño, who shoots, edits, and publishes videos pertaining to Hidalgo County matters. Carlos, originally from McAllen, boasts a bachelor's degree in Communications from University of Texas Pan American and a master's degree in Film Production from Chapman University. Carlos began working at the IT Department in April 2007. Since then, the multimedia department has been documenting county events, public service announcements, and responses to natural disasters. Videos are posted on the County website as a means of keeping the citizenry of Hidalgo County informed.

Carlos' wide array of film and production experience on projects such as Survivor, America's Most Wanted, and The Apprentice give a unique and fresh perspective to his documentation of County events.

For more information, visit http://vod.co.hidalgo.tx.us.

Precinct #1 Improves Service Delivery with IT Assistance

IT Staff Implements IQ to Manage Precinct's Constituent Casework, Calendar and Correspondence

In November 2008, Hidalgo County Precinct 1 Commissioner Sylvia S. Handy needed a solution, and came to the IT Department for assistance. She was seeking a way to easily keep track of processes in her office, including constituent visits, permit applications, and work orders.

The IT Department had been piloting Lockheed Martin's Intranet Quorum product, a workflow, correspondence and calendar software system, in several county departments using and offices, including District Clerk's, County Judge, Budget Office, and IT Department. These offices had been using certain aspects of the software, including workflow, calendar, and projects.

Precinct 1's situation presented a unique opportunity to develop and customize a turnkey solution for the office, utilizing the full breadth of IQ's capabilities to manage constituent workflow and internal processes. IT staff members Karina Cardoza and Priscilda Garza went to work, identifying workflow processes, customizing templates, and configuring the database to serve the Precinct's needs.

Over the last few months, the IT Project Team worked closely with Precinct 1 staff on all aspects of implementing the new system. Because the software management system is constituent-based, every incoming method of correspondence can generate a workflow that then becomes related to the constituent.

Presently, all Precinct 1 Collection Station Permit Applications for this year are entered into IQ. In addition, all constituent work orders are being tracked by the new system.

The best feature of the new system is an added layer of accountability. Constituents work orders are easily tracked and monitored, and administrative reports can be run by Precinct 1 management, making the office run much more efficiently.

Announcing Odyssey Phase I - Civil Transition Committee

In March 2009, the IT Department convened a meeting to update clerks and court coordinators on the Odyssey Civil Case Management transition. As part of the implementation, subject matter experts with significant knowledge in civil case management were needed to inform processes that are critical to the transition. Over the next six months, this Civil Transition Committee will work closely in conjunction with the Project Managers to ensure that civil case processes used in Hidalgo County are included in the new system. The following were peer-selected to serve on the Civil Transition Committee:

Odyssey Civil Transition Committee		
NAME	**DEPARTMENT**	**SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT AREA**
Isidro Sepulveda	Indigent Defense	Courts Business Processes
Norma Martinez	District Clerk's Office	Courts Business Processes
Evelia Morales	County Clerk's Office	Courts Business Processes
Luisa Pearson	389th State District Court	District Civil Cases
Tootsie Barrera	332nd State District Court	District Civil Cases
Delma Silva	206th State District Court	District Civil Cases
Sonia Ponce	District Clerk's Office	District Civil Cases
Terry Trujillo	District Clerk's Office	District Civil Cases
Daniel Vega	County Court-at-Law #5	County Civil Cases
Bersy Sanchez	County Clerk's Office	County Civil Cases
Danny Chavez	County Clerk's Office	County Civil Cases
Carolyn Perez	County Clerk's Office	County Civil Cases
Lydia Barrientes	Probate Court	County Probate Cases
Anna Smith	Probate Court	County Probate Cases
Joel Rivera	Constable Pct. 4	Civil Papers
Joe Alvarez	Sheriff's Office	Civil Papers

Hidalgo County Integrates GIS Services

As highlighted in the last issue of **TechTimes**, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) applications are being used more frequently by local governments today as a means of leveraging technology to streamline operations and optimize service delivery. GIS applications effectively manage information systems in a database environment with visualization.

In an effort to centralize and diminish duplication of Hidalgo County Geographic Information Systems Data, the Hidalgo County GIS Integration Project (HCIP) was developed. This project is a data sharing agreement between the following entities:

Hidalgo County Information Technology GIS, LRGVDC 911, Hidalgo County Appraisal District, and the Hidalgo County Planning Department.

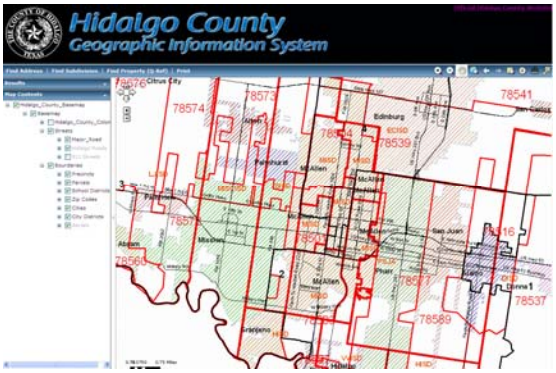
Additional departments may join this project as we continue to promote the benefits and need of HCIP. In addition, other County and City departments within the County of Hidalgo will aid in the development of this much-needed venture.

The project will diminish redundant data giving each entity more time to focus on their own responsibilities making data more accurate and available in a much timelier manner.

Benefits

Having a central repository for county-wide GIS data will provide better sharing and management of data, improve interoperability between entities that rely on GIS services as well as reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts. All collaborating entities will benefit from HCIP in view of the fact that GIS data will be more readily available to everyone that requires it.

The first meeting of the GIS Integration Committee was held on March 5, 2009. Subsequent meetings will be held on a monthly basis. The committee is currently drafting a formal plan to adopt as the new process. The process consists of entities uploading new street and subdivision data directly into the GIS central repository server located at the IT Department.



From the Help Desk

Q&A With Your Friendly Help Desk Guru

Joe Alvarez

In an effort to improve service delivery for Hidalgo County users with computer-related problems, the IT Department centralized all IT support calls through one help desk operator, Joe Alvarez. When users call the IT Department to report an issue, they are directed to Joe, who then triages the call.

Joe is equipped with the training and tools to handle most help desk calls on a first-level response. For service calls that require more in-depth attention, Joe then dispatches the call to technicians to resolve the issue. Having a central help desk operator assists the IT Department in responding to calls more efficiently.

Q: My computer is running very slowly. What can I do?

A: There are many different reasons your computer may be slow. You may have too many programs running, or may have spyware. You will need to have your computer optimized, or cleaned up. Contact the help desk at your earliest convenience and we can assist you.

Q: Why do popups constantly notify me that certain applications are blocked?

A: The County recently installed SOPHOS antivirus, and these notifications are to alert you that certain applications may be harmful to your computer. Sophos delivers complete protection against viruses, spyware and adware. For more information, contact the help desk.

You can reach the help desk at 956.292.7010, or extension 6000. To submit a question to be answered in the next "From the Help Desk," email adm@co.hidalgo.tx.us.

New Odyssey Project Manager

The IT Department is excited to introduce Chris Keltner, Project Manager for Tyler Technologies. Keltner is the new Odyssey Project Manager in Hidalgo County, and will work hand-in-hand with the Project Team, Project Review Board, and Transition Committees in the conversion to the County's new court/justice system. For more information, visit www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/odyssey.

Chris Keltner
New Odyssey Project Manager

New Court

Previously, the 430th State District Court only heard Child Welfare and Protective Order cases. The IT Department was instructed to:

- Add the 430th State District Court to a regular rotation of criminal cases as well as a regular rotation of civil cases, and
- Distribute Child Welfare and Protective Order cases amongst all district courts.

E-File Stamp

Hidalgo County District Clerk Laura Hinojosa took advantage of e-file stamp automation to alleviate manual processes. File stamp values are automatically populated in the e-file documents, alleviating the need to manually write this information on a paper copy.

The IT Department Welcomes New Staff Members:

Jesse Fortiscue
Technician

Noah Lopez
Technician

Michael Garza
IT Security Engineer

IT Department Adds 26 WIC Sites to County Network

In February 2009, the IT Department began adding the following Hidalgo County WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program Clinic sites to the County's network for phones, internet, and time clocks:

Administrative Office 3105 W. University Drive Edinburg, Texas 78539	Las Milpas WIC Clinic 7013 S. Cage Pharr, Texas 78577	Mobile WIC Clinic
Edinburg WIC Clinic 3105 E Richardson Edinburg, Texas 78539	Progreso WIC Clinic 5 Mi. South Bus. 83 on South FM 1015 Progreso, Texas 78579	North San Juan WIC Clinic 509 Earling Road San Juan, Texas 78589
Mission WIC Clinic 211 South Schubach Mission, Texas 78572	Alton WIC Clinic 3513 E. Main Avenue Alton, Texas 78573	McAllen WIC Clinic III 3001 North 23rd Street, Suite 8 McAllen, Texas 78502
McAllen WIC Clinic 300 East Hackberry McAllen, Texas 78501	Alamo WIC Clinic 313 E. Business 83, Suite 113 Alamo, Texas 78516	Alton WIC Clinic II 3519 W. Main Avenue, Suite B Mission, Texas 78574
Pharr WIC Clinic 1903 North Fir Pharr, Texas 78577	Sullivan City WIC Clinic PO Box 1209 (Highway 83) Sullivan City, Texas 78595	Rio Grande City WIC Clinic 604 N. Garza Street Rio Grande City, Texas 78582
Hidalgo WIC Clinic 702 East Tejano Hidalgo, Texas 78557	Mission WIC Clinic II 722 N. Breyfogle, Suite 2-C Mission, Texas 78572	Roma WIC Clinic 1505 N. Grant Street, Suite 1 & 2 Roma, Texas 78584
Donna WIC Clinic 301 S. 8th Street Donna, Texas 78537	McAllen WIC Clinic II 220 S. Bicentennial, Suite D McAllen, Texas 78501	Alamo WIC Clinic II 1429 S. Tower Road Alamo, Texas 78516
Weslaco WIC Clinic 1901 North Bridge Weslaco, Texas 78596	Edinburg WIC Clinic II 113 E. Dawson Edinburg, Texas 78539	La Joya WIC Clinic 204 West 2nd Street La Joya, Texas 78560
Mercedes WIC Clinic 540 S. Texas Mercedes, Texas 78570	Pharr WIC Clinic II 926 West Sam Houston, Suite 3 Pharr, Texas 78577	Weslaco WIC Clinic II 417 South Oregon Avenue Weslaco, Texas 78596
Elsa WIC Clinic 709 East Edinburg Street Elsa, Texas 78543	San Carlos WIC Clinic 230 North 86th Street Edinburg, Texas 78539	

IT Department Evaluation

One of the IT Department's goals is to implement and maintain quality information systems that effectively and efficiently deliver government services in an affordable manner. In addition, we feel it important to constantly improve our service delivery. Please fill out this brief evaluation form and return via email to adm@co.hidalgo.tx.us or fax to 956.381.2152. Thank you in advance for your assistance!

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I have called the IT Help Desk for my computer-related needs.			
The Help Desk staff was professional and courteous.			
The Help Desk staff was quickly able to resolve my issue.			
If a service technician was dispatched to resolve your issue, please answer the following questions:			
The technician was professional and courteous.			
The technician was knowledgeable.			
The technician resolved my issue quickly.			
For other IT-related issues:			
The IT Department staff is responsive to other technology-related issues I have had.			
I feel comfortable with the level of security that the county network has.			
I would take advantage of computer-related, software, or other training that the IT Department should provide.			
Additional Comments:			

information technology department

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