

Electronic Permits Management (e-Permits)

Information Strategies developed the Agenda Builder using the Microsoft CRM development platform, which provides scalability, flexibility, and extensibility.

BACKGROUND

Development plans and project information are reviewed to mitigate the impact of development on county and city assets, resources and infrastructure. While some organizations actually issue the permits, a number of other city and county agencies are involved in the life cycle of land development to include: city planning commissions, the county fire marshal, the flood control district, the appraisal district, the county clerk's office and federal agencies like the EPA and FEMA.

PROBLEM

When a contractor needs to apply for a residential building permit, he/she goes to the County and completes a paper application. This application is reviewed by a PWC employee and once it is approved, the data requested in the application is entered into the enterprise Oracle database. If the application is rejected, the contractor must repeat the paper-based process. This application process creates extensive paperwork and requires substantial data entry.

SOLUTION

Information Strategies developed an electronic permitting solution for the County. The solution enables contractors to apply for residential building permits online. PWC's E-permits application focuses on residential permits and handles Limited Use, Residential Electrical, Residential Gas, Residential Plumbing, and Residential Mechanical.

The contractor can reference a master building permit while completing online application for electrical, gas, plumbing and mechanical permits. When a master building permit is referenced, the fields related to the master building permit are automatically populated in the new application thereby reducing data entry for the contractor.

Many features are built into the E-permits system to simplify the application process for contractors. These features include:

Solution at a glance

Microsoft CRM based application that leverages .NET extensibility

Technologies Involved

Microsoft Dynamics CRM, SQL Reporting Services, Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 and Microsoft Excel

The persistent shopping cart system allows contractors to apply for multiple permits per session. Items remain in the shopping cart until contractor checks out.

- Parcel search solution to interface with the enterprise Oracle database to locate parcels by address and owner.
- Automated e-mail feedback sends confirmations and notices to contractors.
- Permit printing from within a browser. Contractors and administrators can print the permit directly from their browser.

All permits submitted online are reviewed by a PWC employee for accuracy and to confirm that the appropriate permit(s) are purchased. The data is accessed through an extensive administrative interface that includes:

- Creation of administrative accounts and user accounts. Before a contractor can use to E-permits system, the contractor must complete a paper application at the PWC permitting office. The PWC administrator inputs the data into the system and will automatically e-mail the contractor when the account is available (Fig. 3).
- Permit printing for records. Permit reviewers must keep a hard copy of the permit for the files so the E-permits system meshes with the current paper process.
- Approval and rejection of permit applications is completed by County employees online.

The E-permits solution integrates with the enterprise system for data validation and data entry. Once a permit is approved, the application data is inserted into the enterprise database as if it were coming directly from the client-server application. The enterprise database is also accessed for parcel look-up. When applying for a permit, the solution must confirm that the permit applies to a specific plot of land. When the contractor enters an address, the system locates the information from the database and presents it through the web-based E-permits application for confirmation.

Specific permits are unique to the requirements of each municipality. However, the application features are available for any e-permitting system.