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Final Copy of Case Study

Status:
Laureate

Year:
2013

Organization Name:
Town of Longboat Key

Organization URL:
www.longboatkey.org

Project Name:
Fire Pre-Plan, Logbook and Inspection program

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:
Safety & Security

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

The problem we set out to solve was to make the operation of the Town's Fire Department more efficient with existing personnel. Municipal Fire Departments have a variety of specialized functions it must perform. One is to complete annual inspections of commercial properties for safety reasons, another is to conduct tactical pre-plan surveys to document a specific locations' hazards and safety equipment in the event of an emergency, and the third function is to manage the daily function of the department. The Fire Department and IT Management teams evaluated several vendor-supplied solutions and decided that none of those examined fulfilled all the requirements of the department. After several team meetings in which the Fire Departments needs and wants were defined, the IT

Department created customized software. Taking the solution mobile, the Fire Inspectors are now using an iPad2 to conduct field inspections. Inspectors electronically complete the report at the site. The report is produced with the inspector's digital signature. A PDF version of the report is sent via email or fax instantly to the property manager to begin taking corrective action immediately. Not only has the system provided paperless reporting, but the efficiencies gained in the number of inspections conducted has risen by almost 400%! One challenge to overcome was a few known "dead spots" in 3G coverage on Longboat Key. Inspectors have not reported any issues in the field as a result of this issue. Since the users were involved from the beginning and their ideas took shape in the custom software, they have readily embraced the new software and technology. In addition, they are engaged in suggesting new features to be built into the system. Morale and efficiencies in the department are up. See Appendix 2.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

Project was begun in June of 2011 with the initial developed app of "Fire Pre-Plan" delivered and installed live in December 2011. "Fire Inspections" application was developed beginning in January 2012 and installed live in March 2012. "Fire Logbook" was started in April 2011 and went live in July of 2011; final component of Fire Logbook just installed for Incident Reporting and "QA" Quality Assurance (QA) review in December 2012. Currently the QA component is enabling the paramedics to complete their Patient Care report as soon as they are in a wireless hotspot (the local hospital). Paramedics are using the iPad2 to access the browser-based software to complete the report. Previously, the paramedics had to return to the fire station, log on to a computer and key in the data from the handwritten report. Management and HIPPA controls are also built into the system. Emails and text messages are relayed between the paramedic and the QA auditor. Since Management now has a clear view of QA issues, they can be remedied and subsequently electronically sent to the Finance Department which then electronically bills Medicare or secondary insurance companies. The system has been in operation for the past 6 weeks and has received many positive reviews from the users (paramedics) of the system.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

Yes project is complete.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

As stated in question #5, the productivity efficiencies gained with the Fire inspections program have increased 400% (utilizing the same personnel). Other efficiencies gained are just as remarkable, yet harder to quantify. For instance, the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) Auditor conducted an audit in September 2012 and gave the new software the highest ratings available on the audit. Community rating points are awarded for the ISO audit; rating points translate into lower insurance premiums for property owners on Longboat Key. The mayor of Longboat Key, Mr. Jim Brown, was quoted in a newspaper article about the software: "All of these efforts to better serve the community and make the Town and its services more useful. If it helps in an emergency, that is truly a major success." Fire Chief has indicated that Longboat Key is a safer community as a result of these improvements. Article appeared in the Longboat Key News on August 10, 2012. See article in: www.lbknews.com/2012/08/10/saving-time-lives-through-new-technology/

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

This project should be considered as a best practice and notable advancement using common technology innovation tools (iPad) using the browser as an interface into a legacy database. The program could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations to use. Due to its uniqueness and tailor-made Fire Department specifications and features, other Cities have heard about the system and inquired about purchasing it for their own municipalities. The system won the Florida Local Government Technology achievement award for 2012 and as a result, The Town of Longboat Key IT Director has demonstrated this software to a dozen or more interested Cities in the State of Florida. Management tools are also provided in the system (see appendix 1); subsequently system is being used proactively to send the Fire Marshall to locations where there have been repeated alarms in an effort to correct the problem.

If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)

The Pre-plan system is unique in that the system allows Fire personnel to conduct their fire pre-planning inspections to document all safety systems such as fire alarm panel, sprinkler systems, hazards, electrical and gas shutoffs,

access, exposures, fire hydrant locations and information, etc. Currently, there is not any software commercially available for this specific purpose. The system utilizes BING mapping to display a visual of the location. Visio Drawings of the site can also be incorporated into the file as well as other file types, such as photos in .BMP or .JPEG format. All of this information was previously only available in the Fire Trucks in a hard-copy notebook. All of the critical tactical information is now available instantly and more importantly visually, using a laptop or iPad2. Firefighters use this information when there is an emergency and they need to gain access to the site. Additional features are the ability to view the location from different angles so emergency responders could strategically maneuver a ladder truck into position and pinpoint the location with latitude and longitude coordinates. Fire hydrant location is displayed on the map by a dot; the color indicates the gallons per minute, and a user may hover over the dot to see the actual fire hydrant data. IT provided an interface to integrate the hydrant data from our Public Works database. Fire fighters know where the closest hydrant is (visually) in case of an emergency. Using the BING map technology, the map view can be rotated to see a different angle in case emergency responders need to determine how to get a 75-foot ladder truck to the site. See appendix 3. The system has created department efficiencies and made the Town of Longboat Key a safer community.