

April 13, 2012

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focus

Designed for all staff and departments who use Accela

Mayor Beutler Visits Subject Matter Expert Meeting

Each Monday morning our Subject Matter Experts (SME) meet to discuss Accela Automation project issues and progress as well as discuss the effort for the upcoming week. Here is a sample of the topics that we discussed at this week's SME meeting -- record type development, script development activities, conversion and Accela's Data Mapping Tool, Project Dox open issues and extended use by Building and Safety, AGIS status of setting up mapping services, layers, data fields, and an open temporary address issue, Crystal Reports enterprise installation, and progress with On Base as an enterprise EDMS solution. During the meeting we had a nice visitor join our meeting. Mayor Beutler stopped by to thank the core project team for all of the work completed on the first half of the project, which is laying the ground work for success in the second half of the project. Here is an excerpt from Mayor Beutler's message to us Monday morning:



From Left to Right: Rita Cox, Jeff McReynolds, Missy Minner, Mayor Chris Beutler, Mark Kenne, Jim Walkenhorst, Tan Pham

"This is one of the most complex software installations in my administration. As you know, most technical projects of this nature go over budget and beyond the installation timeline. To date, your Accela conversion is on time and on budget. Congratulations to each of you for making that possible".

Project Feature Story: Accela GIS (AGIS)

AGIS, or Accela Geographic Information Systems, is an integration of the Accela Automation permitting application and our locally-produced and maintained GIS data. Why would we want this you ask? Integration of these two systems allows us to update information in one location and use it efficiently in any other system. There are many different "owners" of GIS data. County Assessor's office owns the property ownership GIS data; Planning Dept. owns and maintains the special permit GIS data; Watershed Management owns and maintains the floodplain and flood zone GIS data; Building and Safety owns and maintains legal address point GIS data; and so on. As these various departments update their data in GIS, AGIS allows us to consume this data, by geography, into a new permit. Here's an example: A new building permit is taken out on an address. First, we validate against the legal address data in GIS to make sure the applicant is using the correct address. Second, the permit is auto-populated with the ownership information provided by the Assessor's GIS data. Then, AGIS will do a geographic proximity check to see if this property is located in the floodplain and, if it is, populate the permit to state it is in the floodplain and take additional necessary steps. These two items were done automatically by utilizing the information already being updated and used across the City and County in regards to GIS as

opposed to maintaining separate systems. This is a small example, but we currently are investigating the utilization of approximately 56 layers of GIS data for different overlays or proximity alerts on the various permits currently in the creation process. By utilizing AGIS and our wealth of existing GIS data, we are able to become more efficient and accurate in our permit reviews, all while relying on the rightful owners of this GIS data to maintain it, rather than duplicating these efforts and data sources! - If you would like to learn more about AGIS capabilities or if you may have some questions feel free to contact me - Jeff McReynolds, GIS Program Manager (jmcreynolds@lincoln.ne.gov).

Current Project Challenges

Challenges – Here are some highlights of some open issues that we currently are dealing with. We are doing our best to manage these challenges so that our project schedule will not be impacted.

Scanning - A scanning work-around must be developed. The work-around is needed during a gap which will exist between the time we Go-Live and a scanning solution is available from Accela. The gap is roughly 6 months and during that time frame over 2,000 documents will need to be scanned. At this time we may have to connect a scanner external to Accela and handle documents after the records are created - not at the point of record. We also may have an opportunity to explore scanning with the On Base product if chosen for our enterprise EDMS solution.

Credit Cards - We have determined that creating singular customer profiles and sharing them through LDAP will not be necessary. We also discovered that we can use one common VeriSign account for payment purposes via the web using Accela Citizen Access. We have an accounting sticky point. All of the payments for all departments must travel into one merchant account. This will force some changes in the design for how fees are collected and reconciled by the Treasurer and individual departments.

Crystal Reports Enterprise - SAP's Business Object Business Intelligence Edge 4.0 product, which executes Crystal Reports Server 2011 and utilizes Crystal Reports Developer 14, is installed. During the connection of the new reports environment we ran into a compatibility issue with the Accela Adapter. The Accela Adapter works only with Crystal Reports Server 2008. This is a significant issue which needs to be resolved as soon as possible. At this time we are working with our Accela project partners to determine some options so that we can get this critical piece of software up and running.

On Base EDMS - This major component of our Accela Automation project and extremely important decision for the City is gaining momentum. The project needs a solution in place now; however, we are pushing the project target limits to accommodate a possible enterprise solution. While well worth the wait, we are going to begin feeling some project pain if this is not resolved in the next month. As you might expect this is not only a commitment to a software product for the long term, but also a financial commitment that needs careful consideration. I have asked eDocument Resources for some additional help in the determination of Accela document specifications and business rules so that a spreadsheet outlining both could be provided to them for supporting a live environment. If the selection for On Base is approved by decision makers, eDocument Resources are positioned to create a working environment for us within 5-10 business days.

Project Dox - Avolve provided a document which outlines the net changes in their software for the upcoming release and we are waiting for a project plan. A large group meeting was held to discuss expanded use of Project Dox in Building and Safety. We are trying to create a test environment for Avolve to install and test the latest version of the software and the new Accela Automation trigger. The test environment will be set up as a temporary environment so that Building and Safety would not have any ongoing charges for the test environment. We need a how-to plan for Building and Safety's use of Project Dox. Fred is contacting some other cities that use Project Dox to see how they are fully using the software.

Financial System Interface - A conference call was held with Accela which included all key accounting staff from key departments and the Treasurer's office. It was determined that there was no interest in creating an interface to the City's JDE World Software financial system at this time. The decision was based primarily upon a lack of time savings on a daily or weekly basis; however, removing the human element and saving minutes in automating the process turns minutes into hours and hours into days over the course of time. The group decided to revisit the interface after the Go-Live date and processes settle into normal patterns.



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Our Accela project newsletter now reaches 362 people!