

Civic Systems Case Study: The City of St. Francis, Wisconsin

The City

About 15 minutes south of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a lovely community called the City of St. Francis. Home to 8,755 people, the community prides itself in its small-town feel with easy access to Milwaukee's big-city amenities. The City of St. Francis was incorporated on July 24, 1951, adopting the slogan "Where Your Heart Remains." The City's slogan rings truer than most; to this day, the City of St. Francis is home to a very stable and aging population. The City is working hard to grow and shape its future, and given its enviable location on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan, the possibilities are endless.

The City itself is run by a dedicated group of individuals, and we extend special thanks to Anne Uecker, City Clerk, for the time she spent with us for this article. Anne has been with the City of St. Francis for over 13 years, she lives within the city limits and enjoys working for the people of her community.



Life Before Software

When Anne arrived to the City of St. Francis, the city used an off-site accounting system which was hosted elsewhere by a third party. She recalls having to physically leave the office to go and pick up paper reports which would (hopefully) reconcile with yesterday's balances. At that time, all financials were done by hand, on paper, which made accurate record-keeping quite difficult. There were no word processing or accounting tools available to city employees at that time.

Civic Systems

Having used Civic System's DOS-based product when she was employed by another municipality, Anne was very motivated to bring software-based accounting to the City of St. Francis. When Civic System's released its Windows-based product in 2000, Anne leapt at the opportunity and scheduled a demo of the product for both she and her coworkers. Today, the City of St. Francis uses virtually every Civic module, including Accounts Payable, Asset Management, Cash receipting, General Ledger, Payroll and Utility Billing. The time which used to be spent manually tracking the City's accounts can now be spent doing other valuable tasks. She relies on Civic Systems software to save her time, to increase accuracy and overall department efficiency. Anne proudly admits that she uses the Civic solution every single day in her office.

Anne is very interested in Civic's new Dashboard program. Today, she is the conduit by which all City Administrators pull or view data from the system. If she is busy, or out of the office, their questions go unanswered until she returns. With Dashboard, all administrators would have access to timely information and quick, at-a-glance reports which non-accounting employees could easily understand.

The Virchow Krause Audit Relationship

The City of St. Francis is also an audit client of Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP in Madison, WI. Anne is very pleased with this relationship, because this too saves her time. "Since Virchow

Krause knows the Civic product so well, our audit paperwork is basically ready to go. Virchow Krause accesses our Civic Systems data, and a couple days later, it's done! I don't have to spend a lot of time gathering information for the audit team—Civic does it all for me.”

The City's Future

If the name “St. Francis” sounds religious to you, you are most correct. The City of St. Francis is home to St. Francis Seminary, which is the Center for Ministerial Formation for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The Seminary owns a great percentage of real estate within the City, including its home on a large tract of land on the shore of Lake Michigan. The City of St. Francis is situated on a stretch of the lake featuring a mild, sloping bluff which leads down to a white sandy beach. The water at this part of Lake Michigan is brilliant blue in color. The City of St. Francis is very proud of two new developments which enjoy sweeping lakeshore views, those being two new condominium developments, Parkshore and The Landing. Stylish and attractive, these developments were designed to bring new, younger residents into the community. So far they have been successful; buyers are flocking to the area, pleased with St. Francis' lower tax rates and the uncongested 15-minute drive into downtown Milwaukee.

The future looks very bright for the City of St. Francis. Its desirable location, its proximity to a large, vibrant city, and its roots in small-town traditions will make St. Francis a desirable place to call home for generations to come.

Contacts:

Anne Uecker, City Clerk & Comptroller
City of St. Francis
4235 S. Nicholson Avenue
St. Francis, WI 53235
anneu@stfranwi.org
414.481.2300
Fax: 414.481.6483

Kelly Morgan, Marketing Manager
Virchow Krause & Co. LLP
PO Box 7398
Madison, WI 53707-7398
kmorgan@virchowkrause.com
608.240.2408
Fax: 608.249.8532