Fast-Tracking the City of Brookhaven: State-of-the-Art Technology in Less than a Week

An InterDev Case Study

When InterDev bid on the IT, GIS and telecommunications services for Brookhaven, Georgia, a municipality of 50,000 on the cusp of cityhood, it knew the deployment timeline for the roll-out of services would be very tight. City leaders wanted to have as many of its public-private partnerships as possible in action when the City commenced operation on December 17, 2012. However, the City Council vote to approve service bidders would take place a mere week before the launch.

So committed was InterDev to winning the bid that it built much of the City's IT infrastructure in advance—using loaner hardware from InterDev's asset inventory. When InterDev learned it had won the contract, it was able to deploy a fully functioning IT infrastructure for the new City in less than a week's time.

Today, InterDev is responsible for all elements of the City's information technology and communications planning, infrastructure management and support, as well as complete GIS mapping and analysis, administration of the City's electronic mail servers and VoIP system, and development and administration of state-of-the- art security protocols and platforms. InterDev also makes procurement recommendations and installs, provisions and configures all new technology.

Building on Success

For the project, InterDev leveraged the knowledge and techniques it had developed while working with the cities of Sandy Springs and Dunwoody. InterDev's IT experts selected and installed the core infrastructure, including server, email, storage, telephony and other time-consuming elements, in advance of the contract award.

Within minutes of learning it had the contract, InterDev began installing the final components and deploying the key technical services—including servers, Internet access, email, a website, and voice and data communications—to allow the City to be fully connected and operational at midnight on its first day of operation. InterDev even provisioned and installed "loaner" desktops and laptops for City use until such time as the City could establish a credit line to fund its purchases.

In cases where a service couldn't possibly be made operational that quickly, InterDev relied on ingenuity—and assistance from key partners—to accomplish the impossible. "Normally, we have several months' notice when a client needs phone service or Internet, but when Brookhaven's City Hall launched, we had to find a solution quickly that could provide voice and business-class Internet the first day," says Schultheiss.

"We called upon One Ring Networks—an Atlanta-based voice and data vendor known for providing services in a crunch—to bridge the gap with a 50 Mbps wireless solution until we could get permanent service from Cbeyond. On the stroke of midnight, December 17, 2012, the City was fully provisioned

About the City of Brookhaven

Located in the northeastern suburbs of Atlanta, Brookhaven was approved by referendum on July 31, 2012 to become DeKalb County's 11th city. Incorporation officially took place on December 17, 2012, on which date municipal operations commenced. With a population of approximately 50,000, it is the largest city in DeKalb County, stretching over 12 square miles. For more information, visit http://www.brookhavenga.gov.

Brookhaven GEORGIA

and ready to go." (So well did this "bridging" solution work, Schultheiss notes, that InterDev relied on One Ring Networks again when it later provisioned the City's new Courts facility within a one-month timeline.)

Springing into Action

Immediately after the City launched, InterDev began implementing processes and procedures that built on the success of its original initiatives. Early spring brought the deployment of a video system, more server infrastructure setup and the new Cbeyond Voice over Internet Protocol and Internet solution. In April, InterDev transitioned the City from a temporary, on-premise Microsoft Exchange Server to email in the cloud with Microsoft Office 365. Deploying Office 365 gave the City access to secure, cloud-based Microsoft Exchange email and Office productivity applications for an affordable, consistent fee per user that included all future solution upgrades.

Provisioning Public Safety

On the City's six-month anniversary, InterDev provisioned 50 police cars with ruggedized, in-car laptops and launched the virtual private network (VPN) that connects officers to City Hall and Dekalb County for Computer Aided Dispatch. In advance of this roll-out, InterDev created database tables that work with all the Police Department statutes—an effort, completed in a month, that normally takes six.

InterDev equipped each cruiser with an Internet router, a camera system that uploads data wirelessly, and a GIS-aided mobile data terminal (MDT) that allows officers to write e-tickets, run criminal histories and perform other tasks. By leveraging additional staff from its main office, InterDev's team programmed these vehicles and equipped 50 officers in one day, sending officers home with cars that evening.

Data Security, GIS Excellence and More

Since that time, InterDev has continued its efforts to ensure the City of Brookhaven and its citizens enjoy state-of-the-art technology, telecommunications and other services. Projects have included orchestration of aerial photography and deployment of a City data center and a best-practices SAN (storage area network) to give the City secure ownership and control of its data.

Another major area of emphasis for InterDev and Brookhaven has been development of the City's GIS platform and database. "GIS has given Brookhaven an authoritative address database that all the departments— from finance to community development and police—can use to their advantage," says Schultheiss. "We have created a web app for the citizens, and many innovative projects have been made possible by the GIS database." The GIS database also enabled the City to collect funds and franchise fees for a large project with Georgia Power.

A Long-Term Outlook Nets Results

The GIS effort and other projects have all been part of the extensive one-year and three-year technology plans that InterDev helped City staff develop at the start of its engagement. Through these plans and the direction they provide, the City can align technology and business goals and cost effectively engage in continuous technology improvement. Today, the network and computing infrastructure InterDev built continues to support and serve City operations and 115+ city employees and contractors, the City Court Facility and the Public Safety department. For its part, in addition to providing best-in-class management, monitoring and maintenance of the City's IT technology, telecommunications and GIS systems, InterDev continues to explore new ideas, every day.