



A Shared Services Success Story

Maureen Reynolds, County Clerk of Tompkins County, knows a little bit about document management. One could say that she climbed an enormous paper mountain, and helped turn records management around for her county and the communities it contains. When the process began, the task looked insurmountable. Reynolds describes the situation on Day One: “We were given the assignment to manage the Tompkins County Records Department and the County’s Inactive Records Center. These were contained in a dilapidated former library building, where the boiler and HVAC were barely working and the roof leaked. Inside this document dungeon were stored the paper records for 28 separate County departments, equaling a grand total of 9,000 boxes! Our program also inherited a pair of obsolete databases (Access and MASS-11). On top of that, the County’s records program had been severely neglected for the past 10 years and it really needed our help.” And that’s just the beginning. Little did Maureen (or anyone in Tompkins County for that matter) realize that a strong combination of planning, a whole lot of elbow-grease and document scanning could manage to yield a county-wide Laserfiche solution that would include villages, towns and even the City of Ithaca.

Nothing Succeeds Like Success

Positive momentum is critical for consensus and “buy-in” amongst department heads and colleagues. Capitalizing on her early successes, Reynolds and her team of Laserfiche experts further expanded their document management integration across Tompkins County. Walking us through the spread of Laserfiche into multiple departments and communities, Reynolds states: “We replaced an Access and MASS-11 database in the records program that only was used to track the boxes stored in the records center. As we have implemented Laserfiche in other departments, we have replaced those departments’ databases with Laserfiche and have used Affinity to instantly integrate Laserfiche with other third-party applications. Our biggest success with Laserfiche integration was with our new HR/Payroll system. Prior to the HR/Payroll implementation, we had scanned all of that department’s paper records and they are now available in Laserfiche.

We recently upgraded to Laserfiche RIO and have all 28 County departments (as well as 13 Tompkins County towns and villages, plus the City of Ithaca) using Laserfiche, and plan on upgrading to 100 County users by next year. We also offer County-hosting for the records of the 16 cities, towns and villages in our County. Some specific examples include: in our shared services for our towns, we have automated the routing

of their legislative resolutions from an incoming folder, and with the individual towns’ building departments, we automated the notifications of their ‘land parcel splits’ at the county level. This allows the towns’ code enforcement officers (CEOs) to obtain this information from the appropriate town repository, and simultaneously notifies that town’s CEO via e-mail about the new land parcel information.”

All of this digital document management and shared services has not gone unnoticed at a state level either, resulting in grants for further expansion and also simplifying compliance with New York State records retention requirements. “We have been awarded grants for shared services to implement this through the New York State Archives and their records management program. Also, all new software for any County department must be able to digitally drop the official record copy into Laserfiche at least once a year – as we are using Laserfiche to meet our records retention requirements as set by New York State.”

9,000 Boxes, 28 Departments’ Records & One Leaky Roof

Every great journey begins with a first step. Maureen and her team looked far and wide for a complete document management solution and found Laserfiche. Reynolds

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explains: “We had just finished a large EDMS for the County Clerk’s office, including 193 years of land and court records, and we felt that we had the on-staff knowledge and expertise, IT support and infrastructure, as well as the vendor partnerships to turn the County records program around. However, we needed an enterprise-wide system, so we started looking for one. My CIO had seen a Laserfiche demo when interviewing vendors for our County Legislature’s meeting minutes software. He thought Laserfiche would work well for our county-wide records needs. The transparent records management was critical for us as well as the Records Management Officer for the County. We chose Laserfiche because of the folder structure set up for ease of use, the security of the audit trail, the records management module, the simplified business process of workflow and the experience and reputation of our VAR—ICC Community Development Solutions.”

You can probably guess where this story is going (spoiler alert: there was a lot of document scanning involved). Maureen is justifiably proud when she notes the initial results: “We have since scanned all 9,000 boxes of documents, which eliminated the need for a new building to be constructed, thus saving \$5.5 million! We eliminated paper records in our County offices and are hosting our solution for all of our local town and city governments using a shared services approach. We have established a user group and have received grant funding from New York State to further develop this project. We have also just completed the scanning of minutes and building permits for our local city, town and village governments, and those governments are leveraging our Laserfiche expertise by using our IT staff and network, and our disaster recovery solutions as well. The Laserfiche solution really is serving the entire County.”

Goodbye Paper Records, Hello Laserfiche

The advancements of the digital world pay significant dividends in the real, physical world. Just ask the various departments of Tompkins County, who suddenly find themselves with extra workspace formerly swallowed up by document storage. And the taxpayers in Tompkins County tend to feel a bit better too, considering that all that scanning saved all that storage space and in the neighborhood of \$5.5 million of real money too. When Deputy County Clerk Maureen Reynolds says “trust me,” folks around Tompkins County are more than happy to: “My favorite saying is ‘Trust me, you will love it’ as I wheel all of their paper records out the door to go to our scanning vendor, never to return as space-wasting paper records again! I have never had a problem yet, and everyone has been extremely happy with what we have done with their department’s records and with Laserfiche. We mimic their folder structure to what they have in their paper filing cabinets (or their existing digital file structure) so that end users are comfortable with the product we bring back to them in Laserfiche.” “We currently have 13 municipal partners using our County-hosted solution, with our network, disaster recovery and IT staff, along with other staff from the County. We share training sessions and user group meetings, and work together to create solutions that we can all benefit from. We have also set up a governance structure, user group agreement and by-laws to our group, which we named TSSERR (Tompkins Shared Services Electronic Records Repository).”

Can’t we all just get along? Apparently, in Tompkins County, they really can. Who knew that scanning 9,000 boxes of records into Laserfiche could make so many people in so many departments so happy and productive? That’s the power of Laserfiche.

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