

IBM and Neighborhood America team on public outreach



explained, “To help citizens and government officials meet each other’s needs, we build public communication systems that replicate the traditional public planning process in a Web environment. The system enables working teams to manage public projects, organize and publish content, share knowledge and best practices and engage citizens and stakeholders.”

Bevarly, Neighborhood America’s senior director of market relations and business development, said that much of the project management software available is designed for private sector customers. Public planning differs greatly from private planning, as there is a need for agencies to be transparent in their processes and the need to enlist citizen participation, Bevarly said.

“Our system not only supports both sides of the planning process, internal administration and external public involvement, it also integrates the two. There’s a central repository for information on the project, event, issue, etc. whose content serves the needs of the project team and can seamlessly be presented to citizens and stakeholders for their information and input. Content such as the agendas and minutes of public meetings, PowerPoint presentations, videos, maps, memos, citizens’ comments, you name it.”

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Public and public-private entities require improved communication and collaboration with citizens for better decision and policy making

■ **The Solution**

IBM Software as Services, including e-business Hosting™, and the IBM-Neighborhood America Public Comment® Service

■ **The Benefit**

Web-based system provides public with information on government initiatives and more opportunities to engage officials and provide comments to influence the final outcome

Public not heard on many issues

Public agencies continually take actions that affect citizens, many who feel their views are ignored. Even when there are public hearings at which the project is explained and citizens invited to speak, distance, time and other obstacles may preclude many from voicing their opinions

Traditionally, at an open hearing, the organization planning the project makes a presentation and asks for public comment. But, if it’s the first time the public has seen the details, people may not be in a position to raise pertinent questions.

As Dan Bevarly of Neighborhood America, an IBM Business Partner,

Web system offers complete picture to everyone

What this means is that everyone interested in a public initiative has access to all the same information. When the initiative is completed, all data related to it can become a permanent record by simply burning a CD, what Neighborhood America calls creating "institutional memory" that enables future work teams to have easy access to a project's history to repeat successful planning in the future.

To deliver each online application, Neighborhood America uses the IBM Software as Services business model. "With IBM behind us, we know we're providing our clients with dependable on demand computing," Bevarly said.

IBM Software as Services provides clients access to business functionality remotely as a service. As organizations seek new and less costly methods to acquire and pay for business applications, independent software vendors increasingly are being asked to deliver their software on demand with usage-based pricing.

The service offers customers lower costs that are aligned with usage, minimal upfront expense, rapid implementation and reduced risk. Services are provided on a usage basis combining the costs of hosting, software licensing, management and delivery.

One example is Spartanburg County government in South Carolina. It involves the ReGenesis Environmental Justice Partnership, which is leading planning efforts for redeveloping a community deteriorated by environmental concerns and brownfield sites. The ReGenesis Partnership is a collaboration of local, state, and federal government, business owners and citizens working

together to redevelop the land, which will ultimately revitalize the community and improve the quality of life for residents.

Spartanburg County selected the IBM-Neighborhood America Public Comment Service upon "recognizing that a strong public involvement program was essential to the success of redevelopment efforts," explained Elena Rush, director of Spartanburg County's Community and Economic Development Department.

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Dan Bevarly
Senior Director of
Market Relations and
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Neighborhood America

Learn more

To learn more about Neighborhood America, visit neighborhoodamerica.com

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This ISV case study is based on information provided by Neighborhood America, and illustrates how one ISV has achieved success working with IBM. Many factors have contributed to the results and benefits described. IBM does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.