

APPLICATION FOR 2003-2004 RALPH W. KETNER EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AWARDS

County: Mecklenburg Employee: Nelson Baker Email: bakerbn@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

County Department: Information Serv. & Tech (IST) Employee Title: Senior Systems Analyst

County Phone: (704) 336 4435 County Mailing Address: 618 N. College Street 2nd floor Charlotte, NC 28202

Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees? N Yes

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member: others include: Pam Little, Sr. Systems Analyst; David Ballantyne, Systems Analyst; Wayne Butler, Sr. Network Analyst; Dave Vance, Real Estate Division Manager

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director.

EXEMPT: NON-EXEMPT: BOTH (if applicable to team):

1. Productivity Improvement REAL ESTATE LOOKUP Project
Title:

2. Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2003 and January 1, 2004): January 16, 2003

3. Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)

RE/LOOKUP proved to be an extremely helpful and timely tool for providing information about the 2003 countywide property revaluation. Over 300,000 properties were assessed in the revaluation, and the RE/LOOKUP website provided fast and authoritative information for the taxpayers and many local government agencies. During the two month period from 1/17 to 3/24/2003 the website (MECKCAMA) received over 10 million hits and 216,000 visitors. Current statistics (March 2004) using WEBTRENDS software show that RELOOKUP had 168,865 visitors and averaged 5,000 to 7,000 visitors on weekdays and 2,500 to 3,500 visitors on weekends. The RE/LOOKUP rollout proved so popular with the public that a link was established from CHARLOTTE.COM website to the County web address (<http://meckcama.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/relookup/>). The RE/LOOKUP link was also published in two *Charlotte Observer* articles in January 2003. On the technology side, this was the County's first system implemented using the Microsoft .NET Framework technology. The development work began in March 2002. The project team took an innovative step and obtained internal approval to develop the system using Microsoft's .NET Framework. This was an unprecedented and important technological step for the County to evaluate the capabilities of .NET. This was done with a minimum of resources and provides a model that can be adapted for other applications. This effort also established a new public Real Estate database (for County agencies) that became the single standard database used by RE/LOOKUP, GIS/mapping (POLARIS), ad hoc reporting, and the GIS group in PALRM.

The important features of this effort included:

- Web access to the 2003 Real Estate information with the capability of four types of searches
- Convenient (point and click) links to Tax Billing, Property Photos, ROD Deed Information, mapping (POLARIS), Street Directions, and one page printed

summaries of either the property information and revaluation notices

- A single, shared public Real Estate DB used by RE/LOOKUP, POLARIS, GIS in PALRM, and RE/Business Objects for ad hoc reporting. This database is also available for download to various government agencies
- The County's first .NET Framework application
- A stable system capable of handling high volumes of usage and throughput
- Compliance with County Web content/format standards implemented late in 2002
- Monthly statistics show consistent and frequent use of this system, with volumes reaching 5,000 to 7,000 visitors on weekdays

In summary, the project team delivered a system that exceeded expectations and provided additional value to the many internal and external users of the Real Estate information. The users of the new system were very pleased with the results of this project. This was done with a minimum of resources and provided a model that can be adapted for other applications in the County. This project raised the level of service provided by the enhanced system. This implementation broadened the community of persons who can benefit from this information in the public, private, and government sectors.

4. Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:

This system was developed for the Property Assessment and Land Records Management department to provide easy Web access to information coming from the new Real Estate system. Prior to this system, Mecklenburg County had a legacy system in place that provided web access to the real estate records. The county purchased and implemented a new Real Estate appraisal system from a vendor for the 2003 revaluation. The Vendor's new system had a web access module available for purchase, but the vendor's web access components lacked the functional capabilities and architecture that Mecklenburg desired. Mecklenburg needed a way to show all the Real Estate data that was available for the public, refresh this data on a daily basis, share the database with a companion Geographic Information System (GIS), and provide easy, fast links to other related Mecklenburg web-enabled systems such as GIS, Register of Deeds, Tax Billing, Property Photos, and Street File lookup. It was recognized that a system providing these capabilities would also be beneficial to other Mecklenburg County departments. Mecklenburg decided to develop their own system with internal resources to provide these capabilities and meet these needs.

5. Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided. (Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).

The system was developed using existing staff resources and was fully implemented in January 2003. Information Services and Technology staff resources spent 1700 hours on this project. The RE/LOOKUP system used an existing database server. The cost of the Web Server and Application Server was \$15,000.

6. Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.

The Real Estate Lookup System (RE/LOOKUP) project was an excellent example of an innovative team effort that was useful, cost effective, and highly visible to internal County departments and the public seeking real estate information from the County website. This effort was accomplished without a proven County precedence or model to follow. Mecklenburg County was able to creatively use new technology in a short timeframe at minimal costs to provide efficient services to the public, departments, and governmental agencies. This implementation broadened the community of persons benefiting from this information in the public, private, and government sectors.

County Harry Jones
Manager: _____

Supervisor's
Name: _____

Return by JUNE 1, 2004 via email Rebecca.Troutman@ncacc.org or fax to (919) 733-1065