

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners  
2005 Ralph W. Ketner Employee Productivity Awards Application**

<b>County:</b>	<b>Mecklenburg</b>	<b>Employee:</b>	<b>Neal Dixon</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Neal.Dixon@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov</b>
<b>County Department:</b>	<b>Office of the Tax Collector/IST</b>	<b>Employee Title:</b>	<b>Director of Revenue Collections</b>		
<b>County Phone:</b>	<b>704-336-3322</b>	<b>County Mailing Address:</b>	<b>700 East Stonewall St., Charlotte, NC 28202</b>		
<b>Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees?</b>				<b>No</b>	<b>Yes X</b>

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

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

<b>1.</b>	<b>Productivity Improvement Title:</b>	<b>Privilege License System (PL♦Sys)</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2005)</b>	<b>March 2005</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)</b>	

Mecklenburg County's new Privilege License System (PL♦Sys) was developed by the Information Services & Technology (IST) Department for the Office of the Tax Collector (OTC). The system produced immediate results which were phenomenal. The system benefits were realized during the 2005 privilege license renewal cycle:

- The number of privilege licenses issued increased by 415 licenses.
- 8,352 more telephone calls were handled by staff.
- 11,746 more licenses were processed by mail.
- 3,961 accounts were closed, eliminating duplication and closed businesses from the database.
- Overtime costs were reduced by 30%.
- The total renewal processing period was reduced by 1½ weeks.
- The typical need for extra human resources to accommodate the workload during peak times was eliminated.
- Revenue increased by 25%, resulting in a \$1 million increase in the first month following implementation.

This system improved the productivity, responsiveness, and efficiency of the Office of the Tax Collector while reducing costs significantly. This fulfills Mecklenburg County's responsibility to its taxpayers to provide efficient and high quality service. In addition to providing immediate results, the system will allow Mecklenburg County to experience more growth in the without increasing the number of employees to administer the taxes resulting from the growth. The system also enabled the Office of the Tax Collector to provide better service to its customers.

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

The Mecklenburg County Office of the Tax Collector's Business Tax Collections (BTC) area is responsible for tracking every business, trade, and profession conducting a business and the selling of any goods or services within Mecklenburg County. BTC administers privilege (business) license taxes, a tax on either the revenue of the business in question or a flat fee based on its classification. The BTC currently administers over 45,000 accounts, the highest number in North Carolina.

The continued growth of Mecklenburg County resulted in the increase of business volume and issued licenses beyond the capabilities of current staff to respond in a timely manner. Combined with budget constraints, the previous system no longer met the needs of Business Tax Collections, as it was unable to handle the increasing workload and did not have the necessary features to efficiently handle the growth of the County. The rules and regulations entailed in the collection of business taxes are very complex. A system was required that reduced the complexity of the tax collection process while increasing efficiency, so existing staff could handle the growth of businesses in Mecklenburg County.

Through close collaboration between the OTC and IST, a project was undertaken to develop a new system using Microsoft .NET technology. Performance, stability, scalability, ease of use, ease of integration, and ease of customization were key factors that were required by the OTC for the taxes administered by the BTC. The creation of PL♦Sys allowed BTC to streamline its processes both within their own department and with other departments in the County.

**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).*

During the 2005 privilege license renewal cycle, the number of privilege licenses issued increased by 415 licenses; 8,352 more telephone calls were handled by staff; 11,746 more licenses were processed by mail; and 3,961 accounts were closed. During that same period, overtime costs were reduced by 30%, and the total renewal processing period was reduced by 1½ weeks. This eliminated the typical need for extra human resources to accommodate the workload.

The deployment of the departmental web application allows other departments (i.e. Zoning) to access their part of the system in real-time. This was instrumental in allowing taxpayers to complete their transactions without having to make another trip to the Office of the Tax Collector, reducing return walk-in customer visits by 1,893 during the privilege license renewal cycle.

PL♦Sys was delivered using the County's existing hardware and software environment, and there were no costs for additional software, hardware, or licensing. PL♦Sys was delivered in 13 months or approximately 6,600 man hours using existing staff resources and was fully implemented in March of 2005.

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

PL♦Sys is a client-server based Windows application. It provides application management, license processing, automated renewal billing, and a real-time interface with other departmental entities within the County via an Intranet web-based application (PL♦WEB). Additional modules include new business listings and attic sales.

The feature-rich system incorporates an extensive financial collection, tracking, and auditing, as well as utilizes North American Industry Classification (NAIC) codes. The intuitive tree-based user interface design and stable architecture have increased user efficiency, resulting in noticeably reduced wait times for taxpayers.

The system provides the following features: processes new license applications; generates licenses, receipts, and renewal notices; tracks delinquencies; tracks penalties; enables paperless departmental approvals; integrates with Microsoft Office; provides reporting functionality through Crystal Reports; and provides group level security.

Gwen Simmons – Applications/Data Director, Nelson Baker – Project Manager, Manny Domingo – Systems Architect, Christine Sun – Senior Programmer Analyst, Joy Win – Database Administrator, Keith Gunter – Deputy Director, Robin Lewis – Collections Supervisor

<b>County Manager's Name:</b>	<b>Harry L. Jones, Sr.</b>	<b>Supervisor's Name:</b>	<b>Harry Weatherly – Finance Director Jerry Pinkard – IST Director</b>
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Return by July 21, 2006 via e-mail to Rebecca.Troutman@ncacc.org.