



Manatee County B.E.S.T. *Bringing Efficiency and Service Together*

Administrator's Office

Manatee County Administrator's Office is streamlining its County Commission agenda process to improve the steps departments must go through when submitting an agenda for meetings. Part of the new-and-improved system involves adding an electronic version of each agenda item onto the County website, eliminating the need to print several paper copies.

A new Citizens Action System "CAS" now allows citizens to log a service request through our website, where they can track their inquiry until it's met. This new software also allows County staff to enter and assign issues, update issues or reassign them to other departments, easing the workload on a small Citizens Action Center team that responded to 5,000 cases each year.

Agriculture and Resource Conservation

ARC instituted a new magnetic door-lock system that allows only key employees access to the building, eliminating the need for maintenance staff to control access after business hours and on the weekends.

We're also working making our room reservation process more efficient. Currently, we have to reserve one of the meeting rooms by writing our name in the appropriate room's calendar. The reservation book is located in a location that is not always accessible to everyone all the time. As a solution, we're creating a room reservation system using Google Docs so that everyone may access the calendar right from their personal computer.



Building Department



Building inspectors now have laptops in their vehicles allowing them to head directly to an inspection, rather than coming into the office first thing in the morning. This technology efficiency has eliminated the need for three full-time positions, saving an estimated \$114,316 each year. Our inspectors now review and respond to minor plan changes in the field, saving contractors time, money and extra appointments with the Building Department. We've also streamlined the process for many residential building permits, saving time for our plans examiners and allowing customers to make one stop at our office to apply and pick up their building permit.



Community Services

Manatee County Transit division no longer requires ParaTransit drivers to return to the Transit main office for lunch, adding time and “deadhead” miles to each route. Now drivers may stay on their routes during lunch breaks. Also, Transit no longer requires ParaTransit administrative staff to work on holidays. Together, these simple solutions save Transit approximately \$7,500 per year.

Community Services Elder Affairs division now uses new software to reduce processing time for Medicaid payments from two weeks to a half day. We’ve realized considerable savings in staff time, allowing them to work on other community priorities. We’re looking at a similar solution for our indigent medical billing process.

CVB

Manatee County Convention and Visitors Bureau employees were spending too much time and effort fulfilling requests for visitors’ travel guides. We took a hard look at the process of filling these requests and discovered it could be done more quickly and easily by asking our fulfillment company to perform the work. Now, requests for visitors’ guides go directly to the company and they send the guides, rather than our staff doing the work. This has resulted in an estimated annual savings of more than \$13,000.

A quick and simple review of our Yellow Pages advertising led to us to consolidate ad space, saving \$7,473 a year.

With more e-mail traffic and fewer phone calls, we’ve eliminated phone lines for an estimated annual savings of \$1,200.

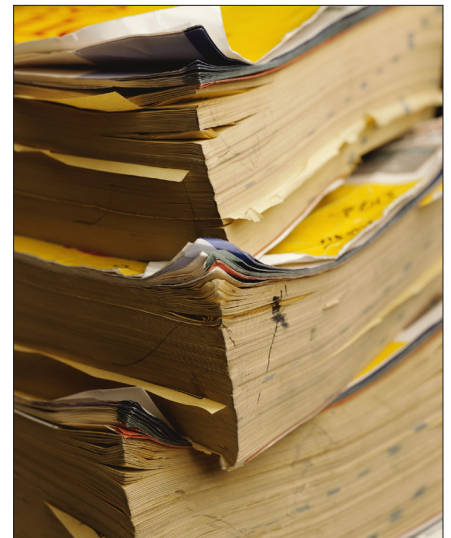
Since opening, in 1985 the Manatee Civic Center has functioned as a Ticketmaster outlet, requiring a trained seller to be on site for occasional sales. We determined this was not a cost effective venture, so we discontinued Ticketmaster service, saving about \$800 a year.

Over the past year, Crosley Theatre staff eliminated the need for professional work by producing our own programs for Poe and Dickens performances. By eliminating professional costs and scaling back the number of handbills we needed on a given night, we were able to save about \$5,000.

Human Resources

HR started with what is called the low hanging fruit, that is, small items that could be corrected quickly. Thanks to the fresh perspective of newly hired employees, we streamlined a number of our processes from the new hire process right up until performance evaluation. What began as a number of small efficiencies soon added up to an estimated annual savings of \$14,264.

The new countywide timekeeping system -- with help from the Payroll and Information Services -- has saved time, money and paper for all departments.



Financial Management

Financial Management has used the Business Process Improvement Plan to improve the Employee Health Benefits division. We identified and mapped three processes: New Hire Enrollment, Annual Qualifying Events and Annual Open Enrollment. As a result, we've simplified these processes and we're working to make them easier for employees to understand. EHB plans to host "open labs" at worksites to assist employees with enrollment and qualifying events.



Manatee County Purchasing division launched a new paperless purchase order system, replacing an old system whereby the County mailed paper copies of the orders to vendors. The transition is expected to save an estimated \$12,000 a year, including \$1,500 in postage alone.

Information Services

Information Services Department's contribution to the BEST Team has had a major impact across the organization. We've implemented the Business Process Improvement (BPI), a systematic approach to help the organization optimize processes to achieve more efficient results. In the past, we've often gone about solving problems in the wrong way, falling short of customer expectations.

Using the BPI system, we first define the group's goals and purposes. Then we identify the organization's customers and their needs. Finally, we align the business process to realize both the organization's goals and customers' needs. In so doing, we've reduced the likelihood of deficiencies when we're problem solving.

Neighborhood Services

Neighborhood Services has created a countywide database called Neighborhood Connections that allows us to have regular contact with more than 160 neighborhoods, 52 non-profit agencies and almost 60 other groups. Each week, we're sending an average of two e-mails a week on the important activities within the community. By sending electronically instead of through the mail, we're saving at least \$12,500 in postage alone.



By investing in three AmeriCorp VISTA volunteers, Neighborhood Services realizes some 4,700 hours work with the community each year, for an annual savings of \$54,519. The VISTAs worked hard to help Neighborhood Services accomplish the Normal Lloyd Park KaBoom Playground, the Pride Park Backpack Giveaway and Fall Fest in Pride Park, among many other events.



Code Enforcement officers are now able to head directly to assigned areas in the morning, and they can work in the field all day thanks to new laptops in their vehicles. This gives Officers more flexibility in the field, saving travel time, and allowing them to cover more complaints per day and to access the system instantly for faster response times and quicker resolution of complaints. We estimate these efficiencies result in an annual savings of \$33,717.

With recent Board approval to work with more authority, Community Development may now have “routine items” executed by the County Administrator or his designee (NSD Department Director). This saves staff time, frees up time on the BCC agenda and allows agencies to implement programs and services faster. We estimate the savings in NSD staff time to prepare, review, route, copy and distribute agenda items equates to an average of \$116 per item. With approximately 100 routine items per year, this is an estimated annual savings of over \$11,600 just for NSD staff.

Parks and Recreation



Parks and Rec reduced our school bus fleet by two buses for an annual cost savings of \$21,672 in vehicle recovery and maintenance costs. We implemented RecTrac software to automate the facility reservation and maintenance scheduling processes, saving nearly \$2,600 a year. We also realized greater savings through partnerships with private organizations and athletic leagues.

Parks and Rec will also realize significant savings by working closely with Community Services Probation Division on the new Work Offender Release program. Since launching in March, trash crews have cleaned more than 200 miles of public highway, collecting more than 29,000 lbs. of trash. The program has also worked closely on several projects by cleaning roads, weeding medians and placing “Clean Up” signs at beaches, boat ramps and parks.

Planning Department

Manatee County Planning Department is in a constant state of process improvement. The Department is now on the forefront of customer service and efficiency, working well with both “mom and pop” business owners and the larger engineering and development community.

We’ve reduced significantly the site plan review process using a Development Review Committee which brings both the developer and County’s review staff together to work through issues and craft win-win solutions, reducing the number of review cycles.

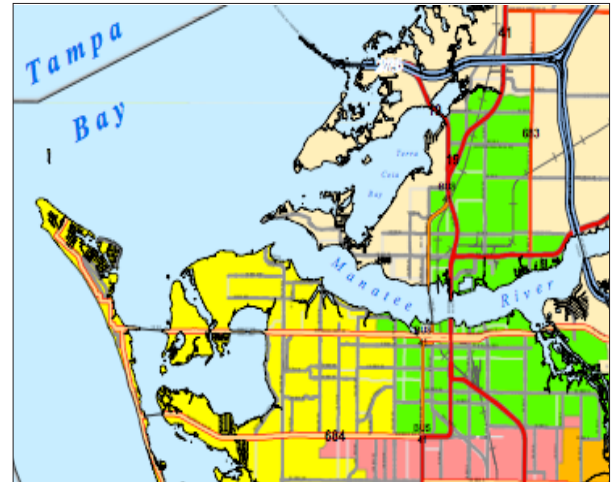
In the near future, the Planning Department will reduce review time even more by implementing a new Buzzsaw electronic site plan submittal. This software allows Planning Department staff to review, comment on and approve site plans online, eliminating the need for applicants to make several trips to the building with bulky hard copies of their projects. We’ll also use this technology to review projects designed in-house.



B.E.S.T.

Our new webpage will allow an individual or developer to move through the planning process with a clear idea of what to expect. The new webpage is designed from a customer's perspective.

We're working steadily to streamline and simplify the Land Development Code. We'll include more graphics, and build upon the recent public outreach and input provided from community input. These improvements have made the process easier to understand, faster, more customer friendly and will save money for the customers and taxpayers of Manatee County.



Property Management



Property Management is heading up a multi-departmental team charged with mapping and streamlining the land acquisition process. Already we've seen improved coordination among departments, property appraisals, surveying and staking. We've also identified environmental assessment issues faster. Once complete, the new process will allow the County Administrator to approve purchasing negotiations, facilitating the purchase of property more quickly.

A county-wide mapping process for travel expenses and reimbursement has been mapped and is currently being reviewed by Finance. This will become a template for divisions to use as a base in their mapping processes. In the future, we plan on process mapping other projects such as surveying, the processing of incident reports and vehicle incident report/review forms without injury.

Public Safety

Emergency Management Services (EMS) hired six "floating" paramedics/EMTs who cover for others out on sick or vacation time. This has eliminated a major amount in overtime, saving Public Safety an estimated \$248,000 a year.

EMS logistics division was also able to curb an excessive amount of expired prescription drugs being thrown away improperly by using a new Ambu-Trak inventory system. The new software allows us to track and inventory certain controlled drugs and narcotics more closely, for an estimated annual savings of \$149,000.

Manatee County Government, Florida



Through better use of technology, the Emergency Communications Center has reduced fire department dispatch time by 52 percent in recent years. Using BEST processes, the ECC will use existing technology to further reduce fire dispatch time by another 30 to 60 seconds in coming

Public Works

In preparation for our move from 66th Street to the 26th Avenue building, we knew we would have less space, so we needed to eliminate much of our stored paper files. We took inventory of all the paperwork on file, and then reviewed the storage time requirements. Along the way, we learned that we were keeping duplicate files or storing files that were not our responsibility.

We found an appropriate storage medium for the files that needed to be saved and we came up with a plan of action to eliminate the files we didn't need. First, we developed internal electronic file maintenance procedures to file and store design documents electronically. Next, we archived the paper files that needed to be saved and sent them to storage.

Now, we no longer maintain any historical paper files. Everything that is sent or received that needs to be saved is scanned and saved electronically. The increased efficiency of being able to word search scanned documents saves us hours per week in research and submittal approvals. As a result, we're also saving time, paper, printing and mailing costs. Most of the agencies with whom we deal appreciate the significantly improved response times, since they don't have to print multiple copies and there is no shipping cost.



Utilities

Manatee County Utilities Department has improved both internal and external communication for water and sewer line projects.

Debris monitors now report directly to a consultant, eliminating the need for printed timecards. This means a significant savings in time, materials and liability issues.

We've worked with Project Management to accelerate the work directive process, reducing down time for utility crews. We also streamlined the work order process at the Southwest Water Reclamation Facility for an estimated annual savings of \$4,207.

