

## St. Louis County, MO

### Customized Munis Solution Provides Fully Electronic Procurement Processing

*Winner of 2010 Tyler Public Sector Excellence Award*

**Industry:** Local Government

**Location:** Clayton, MO

**Employees:** 4,200

**Years as a Tyler Client:** 3

**Budget:** \$486 million

**Tyler Products Used:** Munis, Tyler Cashiering, iasWorld, Incode, Eagle, Tyler Content Manager

**The Facts:** St. Louis County, home to nearly one million people, is part of the St. Louis Metro Area. Spread across 524 square miles, the county is bordered by the Missouri River to the north and the Meramec River to the south. In 1950 St. Louis was the first county in Missouri to adopt a home-rule charter under the Missouri constitution. Executive power is vested in the County Executive and ordinances are passed by a County Council made up of seven members, each from a separate district within the county.

**Contact:** Rebecca Howe, Director of Procurement  
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#### Key Challenges

- Replace slow, labor-intensive manual procurement process with an efficient electronic system
- Enhance access to data for better procurement decision making
- Expand sourcing to include national vendors
- Improve staff productivity by reducing time-consuming manual tasks

#### Benefits: Financial and Beyond

- One comprehensive, fully electronic system for procurement that provides complete process transparency
- Accessibility of data has improved, empowering procurement employees to make better, more strategic purchasing decisions
- Time to award purchase orders and contracts has been reduced by one third
- Significant decrease in paper, printing and postage costs
- Staff productivity has tripled through elimination of manual clerical work, resulting in more time for research and analysis

#### St. Louis County Best Practices

- Worked with software vendor to customize existing solution to meet the county's unique procurement needs
- Offers county procurement solution as a benchmark for public sector procurement systems to benefit other government entities

#### Why Tyler?

- Tyler has more than 30 years of experience providing software and services to the public sector
- Tyler provides all consulting, product enhancement, implementation, training and support services
- The Munis enterprise resource planning (ERP) suite is a fully-integrated software solution
- Tyler is the largest company solely dedicated to providing software and services to the public sector

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#### In Their Own Words:

"We received a huge return on effort invested in moving from a manual procurement process to an electronic one [using Munis]. We now have real-time transparent processing that can be viewed by all internal and external customers including employees, vendors and citizens."

*- Rebecca Howe, Director of Procurement*

## Reaching the Decision to Replace Manual Procurement Processes

For a county with more than 4,000 employees in 20 departments serving nearly one million citizens, a fast, efficient procurement process is a must. Meet St. Louis County in Missouri. For years the county relied on a manual procurement system that was slow, labor-intensive and lacked reporting capabilities. There was little transfer of knowledge to internal and external customers; clerical processes—such as bid tabulations, filing, and typing of terms and conditions for each contract—were time consuming; and the county racked up large paper, printing and mailing costs. In addition, the county didn't always have access to important information that could help them maximize their buying power. "We were limited by our manual processes—we had an idea of what our total spend was but didn't always have the data to back it up," explained Rebecca Howe, director of procurement. "The county Procurement Division contracted for more than 350 annual requirements contracts but we had little control over performance reporting."

## Tyler and Mercury Commerce: Providing a Customized Solution

Knowing things had to change, the county contracted with Tyler to provide a procurement solution customized to their needs, purchasing ordinances and best business practices. The solution: interface Tyler's Munis® enterprise resource planning solution with Mercury Commerce™ to provide a completely electronic procurement process, from identification of need through contract and purchase order archiving. As a result, St. Louis County became the only public entity in the St. Louis Metro area to utilize this innovative solution. "The development of our procurement solution was a great opportunity to not only improve our procurement process and efficiencies within the division, but also to empower all county employees, citizens and the business community," said Howe.

After only nine months of implementation, the new procurement system was up and running. Following a "train-the-trainer" approach, Tyler staff trained 20 key county employees who then trained nearly 450 employees on all aspects of the procurement process, as well as all financial and budgetary processes linked to the solution. In addition, current vendors were trained on how to submit bids and access bid information electronically.

## Achieving a Significant Return on Effort

Today, St. Louis County is using Munis' advanced features to manage the entire procurement process electronically. Employees are now able to quickly and efficiently manage 400-plus blanket purchase orders; control requirements contracting; report on the

size and character of spend; categorize total spend into commodity codes; identify types of purchases as cooperative, state contract or urgent; and track requisition approvals. Electronic sourcing for the county is now conducted nationwide and categorized by standard NIGP coding. Integration with Tyler Content Manager provides complete electronic document storage. And procurement administrators now have the ability to provide needed reports and metrics to management.

The results are telling. "We received a huge return on effort invested in moving from a manual procurement process to an electronic one," stressed Howe. "We now have real-time transparent processing that can be viewed by all internal and external customers including employees, vendors and citizens." The county's time to award purchase orders and contracts has been reduced by one-third and continues to steadily improve. Paper, printing and postage costs have been dramatically reduced. Staff productivity has tripled through the elimination of manual clerical work, resulting in more time for research and analysis. Departments can view the status of requisitions, purchase orders and contracts online. And vendors have immediate electronic access to public bid opening results and automatic bid tabulations. Because of the new system, the St. Louis County Procurement Division was even able to timely award more than 50 Federal Stimulus projects, including construction requirements, received in the latter part of October and early November of 2010 in addition to their regular workload.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of all, procurement staff and management finally have easy access to the right information—such as online purchasing metrics—to make more strategic buying decisions. Administrators can efficiently track and report on spend, research vendors nationwide and make informed purchasing decisions for the county.

## Setting a Benchmark for Public Procurement Systems

As Howe hears feedback from employees and the business community, the St. Louis County Procurement Division is working with Tyler to develop new and innovative processes—processes Howe believes can benefit public procurement offices of all sizes. "We believe this is a turnkey solution from requisition entry to bid, to contract, purchase order, award and vendor payment," she said. "We believe our processes can serve as a pilot program for future entities and a benchmark by which other electronic purchasing systems should be measured."