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City of Asheboro, NC wins Innovation Award using Mobile311

Asheboro, August 2010: The City of Asheboro has received an “Outstanding Achievement in Innovation” award from the Alliance for Innovation for its use of the Mobile311 program. The award was presented to City Council during the July 8, 2010 council meeting.

The City of Asheboro’s Mobile311 program is a GIS-based tool used to get field data into the office. Using touch-screen mobile phones with cameras as data collectors, a wide range of City employees are able to submit information on utility issues, sanitation routes, maintenance projects, graffiti and more. The phones can also be set to leave “breadcrumbs” allowing constant GPS tracking to monitor routes and equipment. Data is collected in a customized GIS application, allowing supervisors and staff the ability to track projects, maintain records of service, explore trends and monitor the efficiency of operations.

Use of the program started in 2008 largely as a result of the City’s research into ways to reduce expenses – particularly fuel expenses in the sanitation division. At that time, sanitation trucks were visiting every household in the City twice weekly for household garbage and recycling collection. In addition, two bulk trash trucks and two brush trucks would complete routes in the City by driving every street looking for items to collect. Depending on the quantity of items placed curbside, these routes could take anywhere from one to three weeks.

With the Mobile311 devices in place, sanitation employee simply select an icon on a touch-screen mobile device to mark a site that has a bulk item or brush pile in need of collection. The next day, employees are able to see exactly where they need to go, and plan the most efficient route to visit those sites. This has resulted in savings in fuel, vehicle maintenance costs and employee overtime expenses.

The tool has been so successful in the sanitation department that it quickly spread to uses in other Public Works departments, the Police Department and Code Enforcement. Uses include:

- Reporting street light outages
- Reporting pot holes
- Documenting water and sewer lines, meters, line breaks
- Tracking graffiti and gang markers

- Tracking Code Enforcement issues
- Monitoring where trucks and staff have been using “breadcrumb” feature

Using the phones, employees can also document and geographically tag site conditions. For example, a water maintenance employee can use the camera to take a photo of what a private driveway looked like before a water line construction project. Relating this type of data to a physical location using the GIS software makes it much easier to store and recall than placing it in standard computer files.

In addition, supervisors can review site information from a variety of projects without leaving the office. This eliminates the need to have a supervisor making multiple trips across town.

The City of Asheboro was notified that they received the award in May. The Alliance for Innovation is an international network of progressive governments and partners committed to transforming local government by accelerating the development and dissemination of innovations. It seeks out innovative practices, challenges existing business models, allows for the exchange of knowledge, and provides products and services that help members perform at their best. The Alliances’ mission is to promote excellence in local government and build a community of practice in local government innovation.

About Mobile311, LLC

Mobile 311, LLC is known for creating user friendly software and applications with a modern edge. Leading the way in field tracking software and public-facing GIS data, Mobile311 makes flexible, affordable solutions that will adapt to your needs.
