

**FLORIDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION
TECHNOLOGY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PROGRAM**



Name of Nominee(s): Sherry Howard, DES; Kelly Ratchinsky, ISS

Nominee's Jurisdiction(s): Palm Beach County

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Submitting for Individual Achievement Award

Jurisdiction Size:

Please note that the jurisdiction size will be determined utilizing the latest information from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR bebr.ufl.edu). For special districts, size is based on customer base and not population.

- Innovative Leadership in Management of Information Technology**
- Innovative Use of Technology to Service the Internal Operation of the Jurisdiction**
- Innovative Use of Technology to Service the Public**

Submitting for Collaborative Achievement Award

Please list the Organizations

Description:

Please describe the significant achievement in no more than three pages (excluding any photographs, samples or examples). As much as possible please provide detailed measurable results or observable advancements.

Innovative Use of Technology to Service the Public

PBC Interactive

I. Background

PBC Interactive is the first of its kind business web-application for economic development purposes in Palm Beach County. Created by a diverse group of professionals in economics, planning, real estate appraisal and information technology, the program allows for broad-scope research and exploration of business opportunities. PBC Interactive is available online at <http://pbcgov.com/DES/>. It includes multiple economic data layers maintained in real time and offers a variety of features for obtaining business information within the County.

An interactive map of business information was designed to help the decision making processes involved in choosing a location for a new business, resource planning and logistics, sizing competitors in the area, customer profiling, etc. This will ultimately increase the business profitability, create more jobs and improve the local economy.

The following link contains a presentation and embedded video stream to the Board of County Commissioners by PBC Economic Development Office:

<http://pbcgov.com/iss/DigitalCountiesSurvey/PBC-InteractiveProject.pdf>

County professional employees who served on the project team also published a book on PBC Interactive which is available on the following link: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CR0N6DY>.

II. Business Problem

Palm Beach County is contacted by more than 1,500 businesses annually looking for various types of information relating to the business climate in the County. The nature of the requests varies depending on the needs of the business. Requests include questions about property development regulations (e.g., land use, zoning, infrastructure and services), enterprise zones, municipal and community redevelopment agencies (CRAs), economic development agencies and educational facilities. While this information is available on a number of websites, businesses were often frustrated and expecting a quick turnaround time to obtain the information they were seeking. In order to improve responsiveness to businesses, expand the business community's access to public information and increase the efficiency with which staff responds to numerous requests for information, we envisioned an all-inclusive information site that would provide one-stop-shopping for current data to assist businesses, economic development and governmental agencies, as well as the general public. To achieve this vision, a collaborative effort was undertaken with the Informational Systems Services (ISS) Department, the Planning, Zoning and Building Department, the Property Appraiser's Office and the Department of Economic Sustainability. This collaboration allowed us to build on existing resources so there would be no cost for implementation, other than staff time involved in the development effort. Information used was already available on each of their respective websites and was linked to provide an all inclusive site with tools that assist businesses, site selection consultants, developers, planners and the like.

The application provides detailed reports on economic and business data and consolidates the pertinent data, reflecting the search of the users for their convenience. The system is intended to

improve new business development, site location planning and existing business expansion, business-to-business marketing and incentive relocation programs.

III. Benefits of PBC Interactive

PBC Interactive is a new application developed in-house by ISS. There are no similar systems that utilize up-to-date information related to registered businesses in Palm Beach County. Only general business information based on Google maps can be obtained from the Business Development Board website (<http://www.pbcprospector.com>), as well as from e-Florida (<http://www.eflorida.com>).

The PBC DES envisioned an all-inclusive information site for geographically locating economic development parcels for the use of:

- Increased responsiveness to local and non-local businesses
- Identifying incentives
- Future and existing land use
- Cluster industries
- Municipal and Community Redevelopment Agency Jurisdictions
- Economic Development Agencies
- Census Data

This real-time research tool helps businesses locate future and existing land uses, zoning districts, North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS) codes, census data, enterprise zones, ownership and property tax information, and more.

The following types of data and GIS information maintained in PBC Interactive include:

- **Future Land Use** – describes the planned future land use designation for a property
- **NAICS** – North American Industry Classification System data related to property
- **Zoning** – identifies zoning classification assigned to a particular parcel
- **Existing Land Use** – describes the current land use designation for a property
- **Public Schools and Public School Zones**
- **County Assisted Developments**, residential and commercial
- **Enterprise Zones** – boundaries of areas within which businesses are entitled to receive financial aid
- **HUB Zones** – boundaries of historically underutilized areas within which businesses are entitled to a percentage of contracts from the Federal Government
- **Demographics** – zip code/census tracts with approximately 20 demographic data sets (population, birth data, income, etc.)
- **Municipalities** – the current municipal boundaries for Palm Beach County
- **Urban Job Tax Credit** – boundaries of areas within which tax credits are available to businesses
- **Community Redevelopment Agency** – boundaries of redevelopment districts
- **Downtown Development Authority** – boundaries of downtown enhancement districts
- **Chamber of Commerce** – location of business office for each Chamber
- **Economic Development Organizations** – business office locations for various Economic development organizations

- **Incubators** – locations of designated organizations which provide technical assistance to small, start-up businesses
- **Tourist Development Agencies** – business location for Tourist Development offices
- **Aerial photography** – digital orthophotos covering Palm Beach County
- **Parcels** – Palm Beach County Property appraiser’s parcel boundaries
- **Roads** – road network for Palm Beach County
- **Bus Stops and Routes** – PalmTran bus stops and routes
- **Railroads – rail lines** passing through Palm Beach County

IV. Project Implementation & Costs

The project and its implementation incurred no external costs for Palm Beach County Government. It was the result of an intra-departmental effort in direct collaboration with the Property Appraiser’s Office and the Department of Economic Sustainability. The project was completed by a team of 8. Approximately 2 FTE programmers were assigned to the project during a six month period. The team consisted of two programmers, four economists, one planner from Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners and one real estate appraisal specialist from the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser’s Office.

PBC Interactive was developed with Microsoft's .NET platform. The application is compatible with all the major browsers, including Internet Explorer, Chrome, and Safari, and has a clean and intuitive design, combined with a selection of easy-to-use, integrated tools. The website is freely available on the Internet and is fully compliant with the W3C standards. The site does not process personally identifiable information and financial transactions are not part of the system. Privacy and security concerns are not an issue with regard to PBC Interactive because we extract and display only public records. We do not require user login on the website, nor do we collect or distribute any user-related data. Government information is organized by combining our internal resources with other public government sources, such as the Property Appraiser's Office data, Countywide GIS layers, Palm Beach County Land Use from Planning Zoning & Building, NAICS codes from the US Census Bureau, and US Census information.

V. Summary

PBC Interactive has accelerated the countywide search of business information from days, or sometimes weeks of manual searches, to only minutes through a free, high-performance website linked to a real-time database. Employees from the Department of Economic Sustainability now have a “one stop shop” application where they can quickly answer the questions posed to them on a daily basis from businesses looking to relocate to Palm Beach County.

The PBC Interactive Application serves as an excellent example of inter-departmental and inter-governmental cooperation which enables business-related data to come together in a form that provides unparalleled access, reporting and mapping. In an environment where economic development programs are competing to entice new business start-ups and relocations, PBC Interactive provides the kind of insight into Palm Beach County that allows businesses to make critical decisions to move or expand their organizations into Palm Beach County.