

Program Excellence Award for Innovations in Local Government Management

POPULATIONS OF 10,000 TO 49,999

Monterey, California

ICMA's Program Excellence Award for Innovations in Local Government Management recognizes one or more local governments that have successfully applied the concepts of reinvention, reengineering, TQM, customization, or other cutting-edge organizational tool or successfully enhanced an existing program or service. This year's award in the 10,000-to-49,999 population category goes to the city of Monterey, California, and City Manager Fred E. Meurer for their integrated technology solution for public works.



FRED E. MEURER

Boasting 99 miles of breathtaking Pacific coastline, Monterey, California (pop. 33,350) is a community blending beauty, history, adventure, culture,

and innovation. It is the task of the city's public works department to provide and maintain the public services and facilities that contribute to the safety and well-being of the community, while still preserving Monterey's unique natural environment.

When Hans Uslar, public works administrative services manager, first joined the city, Monterey was using an outdated legacy system to support its fleet, parks, engineering, building maintenance, and forestry departments. The system lacked basic features and produced redundant data, making it difficult for public works to determine how well it was maintaining the city's assets. To solve these inefficiencies, the city selected a work management system from Hansen Information Technologies to support its street, storm, sewer, fleet maintenance, parks, building maintenance, and forestry operations. The system quickly provided the city with several significant improvements, including better reporting, quicker access to data, more reliable cost information, and improved data sharing between

the finance department and public works, creating employee efficiencies and better insight into the city's business. And this new integrated system enabled the city to enter into a unique partnership with the U.S. Army's Presidio of Monterey, a local historical landmark and subinstallation of nearby Fort Ord that houses the Defense Department's Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

When Fort Ord fell victim to a base realignment and closures initiative in 1994, the Presidio became a separate installation and was charged with supervising the base's closure and clean up. With a payroll of more than \$250 million, the Presidio has become a major employer in the area, and its closure would be a major blow to the local economy.

Motivated to take action, the city of Monterey entered into a contractual agreement with the Department of Defense in 1997 to maintain the Presidio's street, sewer, storm drain, and fence systems. The city's vision was simple: Let the military do what it does best (language training), and let the city do what it does best (infrastructure and asset management). The arrangement would help lower the city's operational cost for personnel and equipment through cost-reimbursed maintenance while reducing the cost of base operations, thereby allowing the city to keep the facility open.



Monterey's Presidio gate design, construction, and landscaping.

This small partnership immediately resulted in huge cost savings in maintenance; for example, the DLIFLC saved 41 percent of its budgeted maintenance dollars (almost \$2.5 million) while the city lowered its operational costs for itself and the Presidio. The cost reimbursements from the military increased the city's general fund by nearly \$300,000, enabling the city to enhance services for its residents, promote city personnel, and create new positions. Finally, Monterey gained new insight into the economics and assets of the base, which the city would inherit if it ever were to close.

The partnership was so successful that in early 2001, Monterey outbid national private companies for the maintenance of the Presidio's complete infrastructure management. In fact, in February 2002, the secretary of the Army directed his subordinate staff to implement strategies and procedures similar to those used by Monterey and the Presidio. The nationwide recognition that Monterey has earned has prompted other municipalities, such as San Antonio, Texas, to implement similar projects. ■