MGT-15

Bar codes on road signs

Bar codes on road signs in Kitsap County, Washington (232,000), allow the county to keep track of maintenance for each sign. Each unique road-sign bar code indicates the road, location on the road, side of the road, and location on the sign-post for each specific sign. County technicians use a bar code reader to enter the information for each sign into a handheld computer. They then enter any changes to the sign. The system automatically records the date, time, and author of the entry. Data from the handhelds are synchronized into the county's computer system approximately once a week, a process that takes about five minutes. The system cost approximately $20,000 and is maintained in-house. It saves technicians from taking time to complete paperwork, and thus allows them to spend more time in the field. The codes are tied to the county's geographic information system (GIS), which helps identify areas in which the county must develop appropriate responses to signs being vandalized.

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