

Douglas County, Washington Selects Mitchell Humphrey's FMS II Financial Management System and Saves Significant Time and Effort

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**Karen Goodwin, Chief Accountant
Douglas County, Washington**

Douglas County, Washington was established in 1883 and named after U.S. Senator Steven Douglas. Located near the geographic center of the state, the County has a population of just over 37,000 with its administrative offices located in the city of Waterville.

When Hewlett-Packard announced its plans to cease support of its long-standing HP3000 hardware platform, the County faced some major decisions. It had to upgrade or replace all of its mission-critical HP3000-based software applications.

One of the most significant systems to be replaced or upgraded was the County's Financial Management application. The decision between upgrading their current system or replacing it with a new solution was made easy once the County was able to see a demo from their existing vendor's Windows-based product.

"There was really nothing new in the application, and it also had not been implemented anywhere else," explained Karen Goodwin, the Chief Accountant for Douglas County, "Plus, the new version did not address a number of long-standing issues we had including frequent W2 forms problems, no report writer functionality, and an extremely limited ability to modify account numbers as our processes changed."

In 2005, the County finance department staff embarked on a significant research project on viable replacement solution options. Their efforts included information-gathering visits to events, viewing web-based presentations from potential vendors, and even some site visits to potential vendors' existing client locations.

"We had an excellent visit with the folks at the City of Spokane, a long-time user of Mitchell Humphrey's FMS II software. They really had great things to say both about the system and the company," Karen said.

In March of 2006, their research complete, the County issued an official Request for Proposal to seven solution providers including Mitchell Humphrey. The selected vendors were chosen based on the fact that they each had government entities among their client base.

In June of 2006, after a thorough review of all responses, the County selected a package of Mitchell Humphrey's FMS II General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Fixed Assets, and Purchasing modules and a full suite of FMS II Reporting Tools on the Windows platform.

"The Spokane visit was a major influence. Also, it was critical that we chose a system that could be easily tailored to accommodate our existing business processes," stated Phil Young, Senior Accountant for the County, "It was clear to us that FMS II would be, by far, the best solution to meet this goal."

In November of 2006, Douglas County went live on its new FMS II system. Integration was established with the County's systems for taxes & assessments, public works/roads project management, and human resources/payroll.

"From the initial project kick-off meeting to go-live, the entire implementation and training process was excellent," Karen stated, "Mitchell Humphrey's people really do make a difference. It's obvious that they truly care about the client and work very hard to help them succeed."

Since they have implemented FMS II, the County has increased productivity and efficiency in a number of key areas. One major area of improvement is in the ability to format and produce the many monthly reports the County Auditor is required by law to provide to the Board of Douglas County Commissioners.

"With our old system, these reports were a major source of frustration. It would take an entire day to complete them. With FMS II, we are able to complete the entire process in less than 10 minutes," Phil explained.

The elimination of manual entry for certain processes has also proven to be a huge benefit for the County as Phil continued.

"In order to pay jurors in our old system, we had to manually enter a mountain of data for each of them on a one-by-one basis into the Accounts Payable module. With FMS II's automatic upload tools, we can now basically upload all of the same information where it needs to go with the click of a button."

"Our team has worked with many companies over the year, and I can say that without question, the Mitchell Humphrey team has done the best job for us," Karen concluded.