



Hillsborough County, FL Building Services Division



"We always get a lot of positive feedback from the contractors and the Tampa Bay Builder's Association about our VoicePermits system. We spoke at a mechanical contractor's meeting after installing the notification modules, and they were very excited about the new fax and e-mail capabilities."

~David Mote, Technology Manager

Located midway along the west coast of Florida, Hillsborough County has a population of one million — and is continuing to grow steadily. In the past year alone, the number of daily inspection requests received by the Building Services Division has grown 25% from 1,200 requests to about 1,500. That works out to 420,000 inspection requests a year, but due to careful and forward-thinking planning by the County, its 90 inspectors and the permitting office staff are more than ready for the challenge.

Since the original implementation of **VoicePermits** in 2000, the County moved from a manual inspection request process to a user-friendly, automated IVR solution that is tightly integrated with their PERMITS Plus system. It has helped them increase staff efficiency, manage a growing load of inspection requests and improve customer satisfaction. "VoicePermits freed up our staff so they could focus more on the permitting side of things," said David Mote, Technology Manager at Hillsborough County. "They have more time to work with the customers who come in for help with issues or problems."

In fact, the system was working so well that the County decided to upgrade **VoicePermits** to Selectron's version 4 platform in May 2004. "We wanted to increase our ability to handle growth by adding in

more functionality — in particular, we wanted to add some custom routines to the way we flagged accounts with outstanding balances," observed Mote. "So now, if someone calls in to request an inspection and the permit is flagged in PERMITS Plus as having a balance due, they can't schedule an inspection until they are current."

The addition of this functionality brought two significant benefits. First, it ensured that the County was collecting all of the fees due on a permit in a timely, consistent manner. According to Mote, "We were losing a lot of money because between the time a permit is issued to the time where it gets finalized, there can be hundreds of dollars in miscellaneous fees assessed against it. And it's always harder to collect fees after the fact."

The other benefit was the elimination of customer surprise — and unhappiness — when they came into the office to get a certificate of occupancy (CO), only to be advised that there were several hundred dollars still charged against their permit. "Now we can manage the process by alerting callers about outstanding fees as they schedule their inspections. Requiring our contractors to pay as they go ensures that we collect all the fees due, and we've made finaling a permit a faster and more pleasant experience for both County staff and our customers."

Business Challenge

Continue to meet rising inspection requests and inspection results reporting needs in this rapidly expanding region by upgrading and enhancing their existing **VoicePermits** IVR system.

Solution

Upgrade **VoicePermits** to v. 4.0 and add **Utility Notification, Expiring Permits Notification**, custom programming to their standard **Fee Validation** service and a redundant server as part of their Hurricane & Disaster Preparedness Plan.

Tangible Benefits

- Continued seamless integration with PERMITS Plus™
- Ensure all outstanding fees due on permits are collected in a timely and consistent manner
- Automatic notification to turn on electric power
- Automated reminders to builders about upcoming permit expiration dates
- Swift recovery from flooding or other outages with a backup server.

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“We receive very quick response from Selectron’s Customer Support department.”

~David Mote, Technology Manager

About Us

Selectron Technologies, Inc. is the premier provider of single agency and enterprise-wide interactive **Voice, Web and Mobile solutions** for city and county governments throughout North America. Our solutions are based on our core interactive platform, which enables easy access to jurisdiction information through a variety of secure communication media and simultaneous host connections.

Leveraging the experience and expertise gained from **more than 300 implementations** and our commitment to customer satisfaction, Selectron offers a vast technical base, and an unprecedented understanding of local government business rules, processes and solutions that span the **local government** arena.

One of the important time-saving features added was the **Utility Notification** module. Now as permits are finalized, an automatic electrical release is e-mailed to Tampa Electric (TECO) so the power can be turned on. The clerks used to manually print and fax these requests to TECO, so this module has been a time and labor-saving investment that has paid off well for them.

Another key addition was the **Expired Permits Notification** module. “We send out two warning notices before a permit expires, at five months out and 30 days in advance,” said Mote. “Before installation of this module, one of our clerks would print out and mail notices periodically. They were getting backed up with that, but now they get a report once a day that lists all the notices that the system has automatically sent out by fax or e-mail. The clerks can refer to the list if customers come in and are upset because a permit has expired and they have to reapply to open it again.”

“We’re really happy with the way the upgrade went and all the benefits we’ve gained from the new functionality, so we’d definitely recommend the upgrade to others,” Mote concluded, who also offered a pointer to other Selectron customers considering upgrading to version 4. “Plan as much detail as possible. We saw the upgrade as an opportunity to purchase a backup server as part of our hurricane recovery and disaster preparedness efforts. The backup server is installed at another location on higher ground, so if the main building is flooded we can transfer service and be up and running again in a matter of minutes.”

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