



information Technology Quarterly

Vol. 5 No. 1

First Quarter 2003

Phil Bertolini, Director, Information Technology

eGovernment to Deliver Vital Records Online

by Sandy Jaszczak, Content Consultant, eGovernment

To the average citizen, getting a copy of a birth certificate sometimes seems like a daunting task. Where do you go? What do you need to do to get it?

After a few phone calls, you find out that you need to go to the County's Clerk/Register of Deeds Office. For many, especially for those living in the southern part of Oakland County, this likely means taking the afternoon off work and driving to the County campus in Pontiac. Of course, it also means finding the right building, and then the right office. Once there, you stand in line, fill-out a form and pay the required fee. All totaled, several hours have been spent and some precious time taken off from work.

What if instead you could do it all from your computer? Whether you're at work or at home, you visit the Oakland County Web site's Clerk/Register of Deeds section and conduct the entire transaction online – any time of the day, any day of the week. Your birth certificate is on its way to your house with a click of a button.

This scenario is no longer rhetoric but reality. The Clerk/Register of Deeds Office is working with representatives from the Department of Information Technology to develop an application that processes Vital Records requests entirely online – from start to finish! This new application will employ shopping cart technology and secure credit card payment processing to deliver Vital Records services to our citizens via "eGovernment".

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This is just one example of how eGovernment will improve the services Oakland County provides. If you haven't heard about eGovernment, you soon will.

eGovernment is a collaborative initiative within Oakland County government to use technology to share information and resources in order to reduce redundancy and improve quality, while

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Oakland County GIS Utility Partners with FEMA to Update Floodplain Maps

by Sudha Maheshwari, GIS Utility Project Manager

The GIS Utility recently solicited and received funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to improve the currency and accuracy of Oakland County's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). The GIS Utility is Oakland County's central agency for coordinating the development and diffusion of geographic information systems and other technologies related with location-based information within various County departments and across other municipal agencies throughout Oakland County. Current funding amounts for this project will be used to inventory existing engineering studies present within the County, to re-delineate the flood boundaries in two pilot geographic townships, and to produce revised preliminary Digital FIRMs.

Currently, more than 75% of the County's Cities, Villages or Townships (CVTs) participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) (Figure 1). This program provides participating communities with federally-subsidized flood insurance when adequate floodplain management regulations for flood-prone areas are adopted. Community participation in the NFIP is voluntary. There are approximately 1800 policies in Oakland County which amount to about \$269 million of total flood-insured value of property (Figure 2 on next page).

Flood Insurance Rate Maps are published by FEMA and are used for flood insurance ratings necessary for the administration of NFIP. However, the FIRMs are often very old and updating them is essential for an accurate assessment of flood risk. In Oakland County, the average FIRM is 20 years old. This project is expected to improve the floodplain boundaries of the county by using more recent engineering (hydraulic and hydrologic) studies and more accurate elevation data available at the GIS Utility.

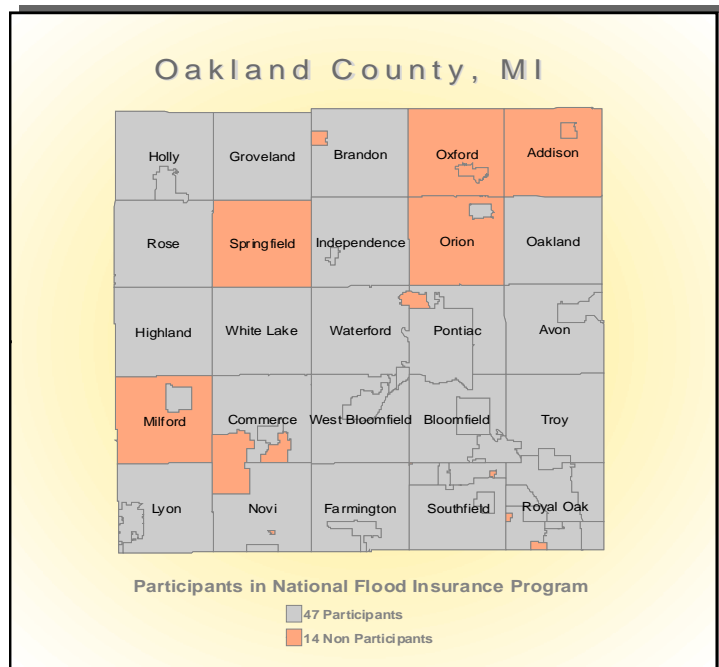


Figure 1

In Oakland County, the average FIRM is 20 years old. This project is expected to improve the floodplain boundaries of the county by using more recent engineering (hydraulic and hydrologic) studies and more accurate elevation data available at the GIS Utility.

On December 3, 2002, the Oakland County GIS Utility hosted a kickoff meeting in the Board of Commissioners Auditorium. All CVTs and interested parties were invited to attend the meeting. The scope of the project, a tentative schedule, and other related issues were discussed. The kickoff meeting provided an opportunity to gather feedback and comments from interested parties. The meeting was attended by representatives from many CVTs, who expressed excitement at the prospect of better maps. The GIS Utility has been solicited by many CVTs for participation in the pilot. The pilot communities will be selected on the basis of criteria such as participation in NFIP, age of existing FIRMs, new engineering studies, flood vulnerability and local interest in participation. The two pilot townships will be selected by March 2003 and redelineation of the floodplains in the pilot townships will be completed by September 2003.

Once the pilot is completed, the GIS Utility plans to solicit further funding from FEMA for county-wide improvements to flood maps so that better floodplain management can be accomplished and the County and CVTs can mitigate against potential flood losses.

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For more information, please go to <http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/gis/news/FEMA.html>.

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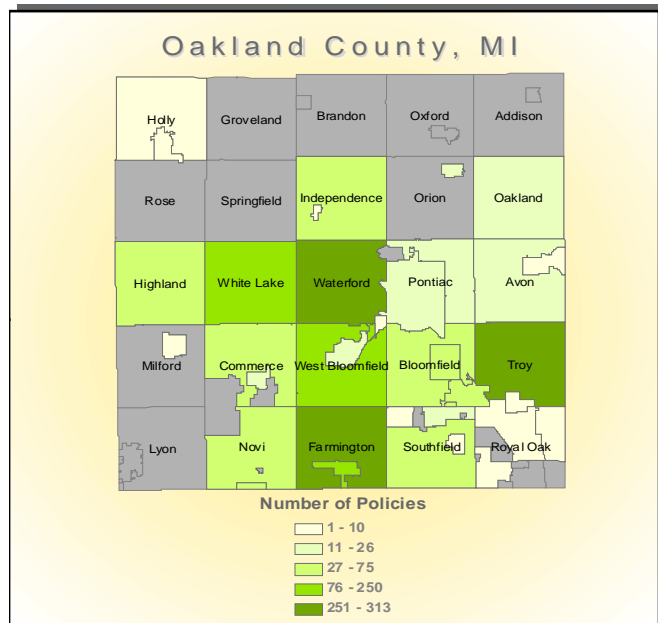


Figure 2

Viruses: Different Types and How They Work

A software virus is a program designed to change the way your computer operates without your consent. Some viruses are intentionally written to delete files, corrupt programs or erase disks. By definition a virus replicates, spreading itself by attaching copies to other files.

Macro viruses spread whenever you open an infected file and can be transferred across platforms. They can destroy and change data saved on your computer.

Trojan horse is a term used to describe a computer program that appears to serve a useful purpose or have entertainment value, but in fact is designed to damage files or install another virus on your computer. A Trojan horse is technically not a virus itself because it does not replicate. It is a means of delivering a virus. However, any file that contains a Trojan horse cannot be repaired and must be deleted immediately.

Worms are programs that copy themselves without necessarily altering other programs. They damage systems by making so many copies of themselves that they can slow down a computer. Like Trojan horses, worms cannot be repaired, so any file that is infected must be deleted completely.

You should be suspicious of any program that you download from a newsgroup, Web site or email attachment. When using your PC at home, you should scan everything you download using an up-to-date virus protection program.

—adapted from Norton 2002 AntiVirus User's Guide

at the same time deliver information and services electronically to citizens, businesses, governments and County employees via the Oakland County Web site.

This is a new initiative within Oakland County that is being lead by Information Technology. eGovernment is being employed in governments all across the country (and world) to help electronically facilitate some of the most routine transactions conducted by governments. This will help reduce workloads and allow employees to focus more on face-to-face service and troubleshooting.

As more people gain access to the Internet, studies show that they prefer to conduct these types of transactions online. Today, more than half of all Michigan households have a computer, according to a Michigan Cyber-State report. And this number is steadily increasing. (Cyber-State is a state-wide think tank for information technology in the public sector.)

In addition to the Vital Records Project, expect to see more eGovernment services deployed in coming months. The Health Division is working on "eHealth" to deliver applications that reduce the labor associated with the restaurant, on-site sewage, well, and swimming pool field inspection activities. The Purchasing Division will expand its Internet-based vendor registration system with the implementation of a 24x7 "eProcurement" system.

Find out more about eGovernment and access Oakland County's eGovernment Strategic Plan online at <http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/egov>. *And begin to imagine the possibilities...*

Don't Forget to Backup!

Whether you have a document saved on a floppy disk, a database saved on your "D" drive, or a spreadsheet saved on a network drive, make sure you have a backup copy, preferably on different media. Backup instructions can be found under <http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/ittrain/assets/docs/Winntbu.pdf>.

On The Lighter Side

There was once a young man who, in his youth, professed a desire to become a "great" writer. When asked to define "great", he said: "I want to write stuff that the whole world will read, stuff that people will react to on a truly emotional level, stuff that will make them scream, cry, wail, howl in pain, desperation and anger!"

He now works for "A Well Known Software Company" writing error messages.

—Unknown Author

Information Technology Quarterly

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Published by:

Oakland County

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www.co.oakland.mi.us

This newsletter is designed to share useful technology news and information with Oakland County Employees!

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