

Edwin Poisson, Director, Information Technology

County Honored Among Nation's Top Digital Governments

by Peggy Daniels, eGovernment Services



Oakland County has been named one of the 2005 Top 10 Digital County Governments in the U.S. by the Center for Digital Government, a national research and advisory institute that focuses on the best practices of local government information technology.



"It is a pleasure to acknowledge and showcase our nation's most digitally-advanced county governments," said Cathilea Robinett, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Government. "There is so

much hard work and planning going on behind the scenes in county government – to make life a little easier for all citizens. Local governments are to be commended for their ambitious efforts, accomplishments and outstanding customer service."

In April, all counties in the U.S. were invited to participate in the 2005 Digital Counties Survey, a set of 22 questions that included more than 95 measurement points. These measurement points touched on virtually every aspect of government information technology, including areas such as infrastructure, network security, Geographic Information Systems, project management, online services, County government information available on the Web, and more. Points were awarded according to a scale based on answers to the survey questions, and a county's score determined its place on the Top 10 list.

To be in the Top 10, counties must have achieved measurable success in both "hard" and "soft" areas of information technology. Hard areas are the nuts and bolts of day-to-day IT operations: reliable infrastructure, stable networking, progressive security, advanced technology and equipment.

Soft areas are the human interactive, user-focused aspects of development: collaborative projects, management and review, standards and policies, customer service and responsiveness, accessibility of government and technological agility.

Enterprise technology and collaborative initiatives were at the heart of Oakland County's

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high ranking status in this year's survey. Over the past decade, the County spent an estimated \$100 million in technology initiatives, laying the framework and building ground-level programs from which to grow. Recent development on projects such as Access Oakland eCommerce, Courts and Law Enforcement Management Information System, eHealth, OakVideo, Pay Taxes, Pay Tickets and Vital Records bring the power of the latest technology to the people of Oakland County. Current projects such as Wireless Oakland and Community CrimeWatch will further expand the County's use of advanced technology to meet the needs of citizens, businesses, educational institutions and local governments.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson said, "We're very pleased to be recognized among the top ten digital counties in the country. Oakland County's commitment to technology places us at the forefront of eGovernment. We've seen substantial returns on our technology investments, resulting in less money spent on government operations and more money available for providing better service to our citizens. The technology that we have shared with our local communities gives them the flexibility to use their strained financial resources for such essential local services as putting cops on the street, snow removal, trash pickup, and ensuring adequate fire protection."

Oakland County Chief Information Officer Phil Bertolini said, "By working with elected officials on the County level, and with the 62 cities, villages and townships in the County, we're able to produce enterprise technology applications that make the best use of resources, which in turn saves Oakland County taxpayers money. Our philosophy is 'Build it once, pay for it once, and everybody benefits.' This is the basis of our success with integrating eGovernment technology horizontally throughout the County as well as vertically with all of our local communities. We're very proud to be honored for our achievements by the Center for Digital Government."

In 2004, Oakland County received numerous accolades for its use of technology:

- Oakland County Chief Information Officer Phil Bertolini was named Automation Alley's CIO of the Year. Mr. Bertolini was praised for his innovative enterprise approach to eGovernment and his visionary leadership of Oakland County's Information Technology Department (www.co.oakland.mi.us/infotech/).
- Oakland County's Information Technology Department was honored among nationally circulated CIO Magazine's Agile 100. In a list dominated primarily by for-profit corporations, Oakland County was the only county government honored. The County was recognized for its ability to maintain AAA bond rating status in challenging economic conditions, an achievement which was supported by the County's superior technology infrastructure and leading-edge eGovernment programs (<http://www.co.oakland.mi.us/egov/>).
- Oakland County's Web site was named a Center for Digital Government Best of the Web finalist, a designation that honored Oakland County for building one of the best county Web portals in the nation (<http://www.co.oakland.mi.us>).
- The National Association of Counties bestowed three Achievement Awards to Oakland County's Vital Records online service (www.co.oakland.mi.us/clerkrod/), eHealth well and septic permitting application (www.co.oakland.mi.us/health/program_service/wells.html), and the Department of Information Technology's Thin Client program. Vital Records and eHealth were honored for enhancing public access to records and for streamlining citizen interaction with government. The Thin Client program was recognized for innovation in government infrastructure and the exceptional cost savings it yielded for Oakland County internal operations.
- The Michigan Association of Governmental Computer Users also honored Vital Records with its Best IT Project award. The Vital Records service was recognized for improving access to records such as birth, death and marriage certificates. The Oakland County Vital Records service is online at www.co.oakland.mi.us/clerkrod/.

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Oakland County ranked 6th among counties in the survey's largest population category (500,000 or more). Other counties honored in the same category were: Fairfax County, Virginia; Fulton County, Georgia; San Diego County and Alameda County, California; Orange County and Miami-Dade County, Florida; King County, Washington; Montgomery County and Ann Arundel County, Maryland; Westchester County, New York; Tulsa County, Oklahoma. Several counties tied for a spot on the Top 10 list.

New Online Services In The Works *by Peggy Daniels, eGovernment Services*



The eGovernment Division recently launched several new online services to provide citizens with convenient payment options for recurring fees and popular products.

The **WaveSaver Pass** is a new online offering from Parks and Recreation. Packets of ten discount tickets can be used at both County waterparks. WaveSaver Passes are \$80 for Oakland County residents and \$105 for non-

County residents, and are available exclusively online at www.co.oakland.mi.us/parksrec/permit_license/wavesaver.html.

The new Oakland County **2005 Spiral Bound Street Atlas** is also available for purchase online. This full color, 8.5 inch by 11 inch spiral bound atlas includes all the roads in Oakland County as of January 1, 2005. Copies of the atlas are available for \$5 each at www.co.oakland.mi.us/oss/products_services/street_atlas.html.

The ability to accept **online registration and payment** for events is now available. This new service is currently being used by Planning and Economic Development Services for the Annual Women's Business Conference. It was also used for online registration for the Economic Outlook Luncheon held earlier this year. This online registration tool improves the process of event registration by streamlining internal workflow and providing enhanced customer service to citizens.

The One Stop Shop, operated by Oakland County's Planning and Economic Development Services Division, will soon accept online payments for **Digital Data** taken from the County's Geographical Information System (GIS). Data packages include custom, multi-layered GIS data for an area of Oakland County specified by the customer. This new service will allow customers to submit credit card payments online to receive data packages faster. The service is expected to launch in September 2005.

Pilots and other professionals who regularly use the **Oakland County Airports** will have the ability to make payments online for landing fees, hangar lease and rental, and other associated usage charges. This new service is expected to launch in September 2005 as well.

Stay tuned for more services to be announced soon!

Active Directory Install Complete **On the Lighter Side**

The Department of Information Technology would like to extend a special "Thank you!" to all of our customer departments for helping to make the Active Directory File Conversion a rousing success. We appreciate your input and your patience while the upgrade was in progress. We are sure everyone will agree that the improved network capabilities are well worth the effort.

THANKS TO ALL!

IT Quarterly Goes Paperless

We are pleased to announce that beginning with this edition (Third Quarter 2005), the IT Quarterly Newsletter will be published as an electronic document in .pdf (Adobe Reader) format. Rather than having hard copies delivered to each department, City, Village, and Township, the newsletter will now be distributed to departmental contacts via email. Less paper will mean lower cost and less hassle, but will still allow readers to print a hard copy if they prefer.

Current and past editions are always available at www.co.oakland.mi.us/ittrain/news.

Backup Reminder

Whether you have a document saved on a floppy disk, a database saved on your "D" drive, or a spreadsheet saved on your flash drive (memory stick), make sure you have a backup copy, preferably on a different media. Equipment fails, and accidents happen!

Backup instructions can be found under www.co.oakland.mi.us/ittrain/documentation, then click on the related link for Windows NT or Windows XP. Please contact the IT Help Desk at (248) 858-8812 with any questions.

A teacher asked one of her pupils, "What is the nation's capital?"

The reply was, "Washington DC."

On being asked what the "DC" stood for, the pupil added, "Dot com!"

— adapted from www.amazinghumor.com

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

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