

Greener Pastures

Written by Laserfiche Staff



When Wendi Smith accompanied her friend Kristy DeLong from the City of Carmel, IN, to the [Laserfiche Conference in Los Angeles last January](#), she was supposed to be on vacation. But as the Administrative Assistant for the Town of Brownsburg’s Planning and Building Department, Smith started to get her own ideas about the kinds of cost-savings and operational efficiencies Laserfiche could bring to the modest but progressive Brownsburg, a town of just 20,000 that *Money* Magazine named the 33rd “Best Place to Live in America.”

Organization Profile:

- Home to 20,000 residents, Brownsburg, IN, was named the 33rd “Best Place to Live in America” by *Money* Magazine.

Situation:

- Town Council member Bill Sibbing wanted to eliminate the paper Council members received each week.
- Sibbing contacted Assistant Town Manager Christine Curtis about adopting a paperless system that could archive files, interconnect information between departments and manage each department’s information.
- Curtis learned the Town actually already had an underused Laserfiche installation, now a decade old, that could do just that.

Solution:

- A Laserfiche Committee was formed, and a month later, its research had inspired a town-wide “Go Green” initiative centered around an enterprise Laserfiche deployment.
- The Committee mapped out a three-phase implementation plan, first training department administrators in how to use Laserfiche, then training staff, with plans to eventually push Laserfiche out to the public.

Benefits:

- Though the Town’s Boards and Commissions use just a single workflow, ROI figures indicate Laserfiche will pay for itself in just 2 ½ years.

- The budget committee can log in from home and see the latest budget being utilized, which enables better interdepartmental information sharing.
- Future projects include creating a custom workflow that will allow builders and residents to submit permit applications and documents online.

Processes:

- Agenda management
- Budget management
- Business process management
- HR onboarding

Meanwhile, Town Council member Bill Sibbing had the idea to do something about the amount of paper Council members received each week, as well as the storage and staff costs to file it and then decipher just which paperwork needed to be schlepped back and forth between meetings. Sibbing contacted Christine Curtis, Assistant Town Manager, about adopting a paperless system that could archive files, interconnect information between departments and manage each department's information. Curtis created a committee to move the plan forward.

Curtis learned the Town actually already had an underused Laserfiche installation, now a decade old, that could do just that. Curtis discussed the idea of reinvigorating it with Smith who, remembering her time at the Laserfiche Conference, contacted Indiana reseller Nancy Mathes of Paper-Lite. Mathes had worked with Smith's friend in Carmel, and over the next month or so, Smith gathered information to assist with moving forward with a like-minded program in Brownsburg. "I kind of beat up Nancy for information," she jokes.

A month later the Committee's research had inspired a town-wide "Go Green" initiative centered around an enterprise Laserfiche deployment. "We are so busy with such a small staff that we're looking for ways to do more with less," Curtis says. "We thought Laserfiche could be one of the tools."

A Laserfiche Committee was formed, consisting of Smith, Curtis and Sibbing, as well as Planning Technician Jon Blake and IT Director Pete Palanca. Its first task was to make Council meetings paperless. As Curtis notes, "Those packets literally represented hundreds and hundreds of hours of staff time and effort."

Blake redesigned the Council Room desk to accommodate an additional 12 monitors and additional hardware for each member to access their computer during the Boards and Commissions meeting, an engineering feat, notes Smith, that had the bonus effect

of making members more visible to the public because the original monitors were lowered. Score one for transparent government.

For her part, Mathes presented her paperless solution in a way that was likewise transparent—one that didn't demand that council members change their way of working. "They didn't want a link to an agenda, they wanted their own copies of the agenda delivered to them that they could mark up and use at the meeting just like they were used to doing with the paper packets," Mathes explains. Using Laserfiche Workflow, she showed Brownsburg council staff how to prepare and route individual files containing the agenda packet. And with that, Brownsburg's "Go Green" initiative had its engine. "That council meeting really was the first driving force to the whole Town using Laserfiche," says Curtis.

The Laserfiche Committee mapped out a three-phase implementation, first training department administrators in how to use Laserfiche, then training staff, with the idea to eventually push it out to the public and workers in the field via Web Access.

Installation began in July with Jessica Mathes of Paper-Lite holding week-long training sessions for Town staff in virtually every department, from Accounting and HR to Department of Public Works, regardless of their computer experience. Mathes also sat down with HR department staff to create templates and a folder structure. Plans are in place to automate the HR onboarding process with a custom workflow where individuals will fill out a form online to be sent to the Human Resources Coordinator, who then sends it to a department head for viewing – all while Audit Trail ensures that the documents remain confidential to manage liability and compliance risks.

But for the first real-time use of Laserfiche, just not having to make those 14 two-inch thick paper packets for the town's August council meeting was enough. "Workflow was up and running," Curtis says, "and we went live." Now with all systems up and running, and the Council members comfortable with the transition, Council meetings will be completely paperless by October 22, 2009.

It is significant that the Town of Brownsburg's success so far, as well as its future plans, owes as much to having active, enthusiastic internal champions – Smith, Curtis and Sibbing among them – as it does to having targeted improvable business processes where using Laserfiche can really shine. Like producing the Town's newsletter, Curtis says. "Each department writes its own articles and adds its own pictures, even though they're all in different buildings," she explains. "That saves a lot of time and effort."

Curtis admits Brownsburg's use of Workflow is rudimentary so far, "because we had to move quickly on this," she says. But she can already point to enterprise efficiencies – and savings – based on the Town's investment in Laserfiche. Though the Town's Boards and Commissions use just a single workflow, the Committee has already produced ROI figures that calculate Laserfiche will pay for itself in just 2 ½ years. "The ROI that was calculated was just for use with the Boards and Commissions going paperless, including what we're spending now in staff time and supplies," Curtis explains. "When we start adding additional licenses and using it more, we're getting above and beyond what we originally expected in our ROI."

At the same time, certain processes are quietly reaping the benefits of automation while fostering collaboration. "When we walk through our budget process, we're working with all our charts and our documents. The budget committee can log in from home and see the latest budget being utilized," offers Curtis. "It's true interdepartmental sharing of information."

Future projects include the Planning and Building department integrating Laserfiche with [Laserfiche PDP partner Energov](#) to link documentation from permits and blueprints and also create a custom Workflow that will allow builders and residents to submit permit applications and documents online, using Laserfiche not just to push information out to residents, but to pull it in as well —saving time and even generating revenue in the process.

Police Captain Jeff Gray is also looking into utilizing Laserfiche to move court-bound information to the Hendricks County Prosecutor's Office via Workflow so that multiple drives across the county will no longer be necessary to deliver documents.

The possibilities are as endless as the cost savings are real. Now the challenge is keeping up with evolving scale of Laserfiche use, which now includes all town departments and a growing number of workstations. Until now, Smith, Curtis and Blake have administered the system internally. "Really it's been a discussion of who can dedicate the time and interest," Curtis explains. "We wouldn't be where we are today without the help of Nancy and Jessica and Paper-Lite. We were lucky Wendi had a solid computer background and could take time to wear an additional hat."

Now, to keep up with the town's growing overall IT needs, including supporting Laserfiche, a new IT Technician, Adam Kirby, has been brought on board. Curtis adds that, just like Smith did last year, Kirby will be attending [the Laserfiche Conference this January](#), although this time he'll be going for work and not vacation—to get his own idea of just what Brownsburg can do with Laserfiche.

Town of Brownsburg Timeline

- **January 2009** -Wendi Smith attends Laserfiche Conference; Councilman Bill Sibbing inspires paperless initiative in Brownsburg
- **February 2009** - Committee researches Laserfiche with help of Paper-Lite
- **May 2009** - Town Council approves appropriation
- **July 2009** - Deployment and training by reseller Paper-Lite
- **August 2009** -System goes live beginning with automating Council agenda packet process
- **October 22, 2009** - First totally paperless Council Meeting
- **Future plans:** HR onboarding; Workflow for use by Police Department; Energov integration in Planning and Building; enable builders and residents to submit permit applications and documents online.



Laserfiche Staff – The team responsible for sharing all new product announcements, updates and stories from Laserfiche HQ. Follow us on twitter for all the latest updates and chatter about Enterprise Content Management: @laserfiche