

Village of Lansing

"Our village developed a Web site to provide citizens, businesses, and our own staff with easy access to government information. All village meeting minutes, newsletters, and zoning laws since 1999 are indexed on the site. Users can search for issue-specific information by typing in key words on the home page.

This search capability allows government officials to keep track of issues in meeting minutes on the site rather than thumbing through a stack of paper copies. The Web site also provides citizens with around-the-clock access to issue-specific information. For example, in the middle of the night a citizen can find out the Village's regulations on dog owners' responsibilities instead of waiting for the village office to open the next day."

Larry Fresinski
Deputy Mayor
Village of Lansing

Town of Victor

"It's so important to get the message out to smaller municipalities that no one is 'too small' for e-government. It shouldn't be seen as a yes or no question when it's really a matter of determining an appropriate and affordable starting point.

Every town and village can benefit from an e-government initiative. It might be as simple as a computer with a modem and an Internet e-mail account. Finding something that's right for them and getting started - that's the important thing."

Betty Barry
Town Clerk
Town of Victor

Schenectady County

"Local government is given a set of tasks to perform. When we are forced to choose between plowing the roads and buying a computer system, we have to plow the roads. But I also have a commitment to provide citizens with a wide-open door to government information through the Internet. The challenge is making sure that it's easy for the user without making them pay for it."

John Woodward
County Clerk
Schenectady County

Village of New Paltz

"We are really trying innovative ways to get more people involved in our village government. We have started to audio broadcast our village meetings live over the Internet. Trustees respond to real time e-mail questions during the meeting. This new way of interacting is generating a lot of interest and excitement in the community."

Robert Feldman
Trustee
Village of New Paltz

Cortland County

"Our office is charged with keeping an updated roster of elected officials for all municipalities in the county. Under the old process, the roster was updated once a year and then a printed listing was distributed by mail. Any changes were documented in the our master file but were not disseminated.

On our Web site, we can now post the most recent listing of elected officials and report any changes immediately. This electronic process takes less time and allows changes in the roster to be made immediately over the county's Web site - a service greatly appreciated by the individuals and businesses that look for that information."

Judith Riehlman
County Clerk
Cortland County

Town of Colonie

"Our town has a large number of restaurants in its community and we recently decided to revise our liquor license renewal process. Currently, eight different departments must approve the renewal of a liquor license within a 30-day period. Due to the high volume of applications, we often exceeded this time frame. By using e-mail, the process that used to take as long as a month and a half, today takes less than two weeks.

Now when a business submits a certified letter of intent to renew its liquor license, an e-mail is sent to notify each department of the restaurant's intent to renew with a request for any concerns from the departments. If there is a concern, we notify the applicant and ask them to resolve it. This streamlined internal process allows us to better serve the restaurant businesses by renewing licenses faster."

Diane Conroy-LaCivita
Deputy Clerk
Town of Colonie

Town of South Bristol

"In the Town of South Bristol, the board members surveyed citizens to ask them if they wanted to build a new firehouse. To sustain public interest in this proposed venture, we followed the survey with a broadcast e-mail and articles about the firehouse to increase attendance at meetings.

The increase in attendance at meetings encouraged more discussion and feedback. It kept the issue on the community's radar screen and increased the community's participation in the decision-making process."

Thomas Hawks II
Councilman
Town of South Bristol

City of Rye

"In the City of Rye, we use the services of a third-party vendor to process credit card transactions for tax and recreation payments. In exchange, the vendors keep the fees. Our Recreation Department sponsors summer baseball and science camps for kids and provides parents with the ability to register and pay for these programs on the Internet. In addition, city homeowners can use a credit card to pay property taxes online."

Julia Novack
City Manager
City of Rye

City of Long Beach

"The staff in the Tax Department at the City of Long Beach was planning to develop a major new information system. They knew what they wanted the system to do but were unsure how to find just the right system and vendor. They decided to ask other local governments about the systems they were using. They met with four municipal tax departments and asked questions about functionality, ease of use, and vendor support. Each municipality explained what they liked about their system, what was missing, and what they would change if they could. Critical to this process was that each municipality frankly discussed the relationship they had with their vendor and either recommended them or not. This research and advice enabled the tax department to choose the system and vendor that best supported their need and avoid those that didn't."

Robert Piazza
Assistant Superintendent
City of Long Beach

Monroe County

"Our document management software vendor invited us to be a pilot county for the development of a Web-based informational system to provide Internet access to public records filed with the Monroe County Clerk's Office.

Being the pilot government allowed us to greatly impact the development of the system and purchase it at a substantial discount. Once the development was complete, we tested the pilot with abstractors, banks, attorneys,

realtors, and news organizations. Not only did these entities provide valuable feedback but they helped build a solid demand for the service, which will help generate revenue once this information is offered on a fee-for-service basis. This public-private partnership created a true, win-win situation!"

Larry Staub
Deputy County Clerk
Monroe County

City of Ithaca

"In the City of Ithaca, we created a Web-based GIS tool for searching specific property information. On the city's homepage, citizens can select a street address and retrieve the tax parcel number, a description of the type of property, the zone district, a building ID number, the assigned voting district, elected representatives, and designated trash pick-up days. The system also generates maps and a picture of a property.

The original Web site was resisted by elected officials and law enforcement because it included information that they believed might compromise personal privacy and security. As a result, we removed information about owners, property values, and photos of structures on the property that might expose a greater risk of burglary and other criminal behavior. Meanwhile, we enhanced the tool by adding useful information that documents natural areas, historic districts, and neighborhood associations."

Julie Holcomb
City Clerk
City of Ithaca

City of Cohoes

"E-government provides another way to serve constituents. This past week an eight-year-old girl e-mailed me because her mom and dad were having a hard time getting a house. I'm not a real estate broker, but I was able to get back to her with information about affordable housing in the city. She gave that to her mom and dad and they were very thankful."

John McDonald III
Mayor
City of Cohoes

Town of Trenton

"In our town, we put every possible form, permit, and application on our Web site. We did this so our citizens and businesses can save themselves trips to the clerk's office. Forms for copies of birth, death, and marriage certificates, and zoning plans, site plan review, dog licenses, disabled parking, swimming lessons, and part time town jobs are now available at the click of a button.

Before the forms were on our site, people had to come to the clerk's office when it was open - which was only part-time. Now, citizens and businesses can download a form, fill it out, attach payment, and mail it in --whenever it is convenient for them. Our site makes this information available to people 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and that's just better government."

Jeanne Brown
Deputy Town Clerk
Town of Trenton

Town of Amherst

"E-government provides a way to improve the way we do business, both within government and with the public. One way is by e-mail - it can make internal and external communication more efficient. By using e-mail between departments, I can get information from other departments without playing 'phone tag' all day.

In communicating with the public, it has helped town officials stay more connected. I get e-mail all the time from citizens and I answer them from home if I don't have enough time during the day. This allows us to be available more than just 9-5."

Susan Grelick
Town Supervisor

Town of Amherst

E-government is,,,

E-government is "the use of information technology to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services."