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Eight Connecticut Towns Sign up for Regional On-Line Permitting System

Residents and businesses in some Connecticut towns will soon be able to apply for and receive their building permits over the internet, thanks to a regional e-government initiative being managed by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG).

“This program will save Connecticut businesses a significant amount of time and money, avoid wasted trips to Town Hall, and allow municipal staff to operate more efficiently,” said Mayor Melody Currey, Chair of CRCOG and Mayor of East Hartford, one of eight Connecticut towns participating in the program.

Currently, to obtain even the simplest permit, applicants need to drive to Town hall, fill out forms, and submit them. When the permit application is received, a clerk must manually verify that the contractor has the appropriate license and insurance, and then enter all of the information into a computer or use a paper filing system to track the permit through the approval process.

The new system will automate many elements of the permitting process. Simple permits will be obtainable over the internet, and the process of verifying contractor licenses and ensuring that taxes on the property are paid will be automated. Applicants will also be able to check on the status of their permits and request inspections on-line.

A similar effort in Washington State has saved contractors over \$400,000 in direct labor costs simply by eliminating unnecessary trips to Town Halls.

“This program is a win for towns and their permitting customers,” said Lyle Wray, Executive Director of CRCOG. “It will make construction, remodeling, and other development projects easier and less costly and help hard working municipal staff work more efficiently in a time of tightening budgets and reduced staffing.”

The eight towns participating in the first phase of this program are: Bolton, Coventry, Glastonbury, East Hartford, Manchester, Newington, Simsbury, and Wethersfield. Towns will provide the service using ViewPermit software, a product of Massachusetts-based ViewPoint Engineering, Inc, chosen for the regional effort through a competitive selection process.

The towns are receiving the software at a significant discount because of the regional nature of the system, which reduces the costs. In addition, they are receiving subsidies of \$25,000 to \$15,000, part of an Office of Policy Management grant received by CRCOG to promote service sharing among municipal governments. The software is anticipated to be available on-line in March, 2010.

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