



Overview

- Rural city 30 miles south of San Jose, California
- Population about 45,000
- \$115 million annual city budget
- 250 full-time employees and 79 part-time employees

Summary

In the past few years, Gilroy, California has experienced a population growth rate of about 30%. Like many cities, it has had to handle the corresponding increase in demand for city services without an increase in dollars or personnel. But Gilroy has successfully managed its growth by using technology to streamline its processes. **eCommunityPLUS+** from SunGard Pentamation has helped Gilroy create a digital archive for supporting documents, automate check processing, and improve workflow using templates that integrate the city database with traditional office software programs. “We couldn’t grow staff-wise,” said IT Director David Chulick, “But we could grow service-wise with the help of technology.”

Gilroy, California is known as the garlic capital of the world. Approaching the city, your nose indicates that you’ve arrived as the scent of garlic fills the air. Though garlic farming is the city’s most well-known industry, in recent years, Gilroy has been expanding as a residential community for Silicon Valley commuters, a regional shopping center, and a base for diverse industries.

“The SunGard Pentamation system has helped us change the way we perform...We’ve improved our cash flow and our workflow.”

David Chulik
IT Director
City of Gilroy, CA

The need for city services has been growing in Gilroy as well. But instead of becoming more cumbersome, some of Gilroy’s city services have actually become smoother and more cost-effective to run. One reason the city has been able to achieve efficiencies is because it uses SunGard Pentamation’s **eCommunityPLUS+** software. “The SunGard Pentamation system has helped us change the way we perform check processing, permit applications, and recordkeeping,” said Gilroy IT Director David Chulick, “We’ve improved our cash flow and our workflow.”

“The best thing about the document management system...no filing.”

Carmen Medrano
Financial Analyst
City of Gilroy, CA

Benefits

- **Document attachments** maintain a digital archive for city documents and records, minimizing the cost and labor of paper files.
- **Automatic check processing** reduces bank fees and posts same-day funds.
- **Integration with office software improves workflow** since permit applications and other documents are automatically populated with live data.

Digital archives

Every city has to manage a mountain of records, since they are required to save most official documents—including community services documents—for the current year plus five. Storing that much paper may require thousands of square feet, and trying to locate a single physical document can take hours or days.

But Gilroy no longer pays for a building to store its paper documents and no longer spends significant time retrieving them. The city uses the attachment feature that's part of their SunGard Pentamation system to keep a permanent digital archive. Records can include links to electronic documents, such a permit files or scans of actual payments.

Using this feature, the city saves about four reams of paper a day. That helps out with the office supply budget and is good for the environment as well. But what employees appreciate most is the fast and easy access to the well-organized database of PDF files. “The best thing about the document management system?” said Financial Analyst Carmen Medrano, “No filing.”

Document attachments allow users to store all city documents as digital files, including meeting minutes, presentations, budget documents, maps, and permits. Also, many forms, such as building applications or business licenses are processed digitally from the start, so a copy of the completed forms are simply archived. Receipts, checks, and other certificates that originate on paper are scanned into the system and stored as PDF files.

When city employees or auditors need to refer to a document, they can quickly access them by selecting them from a familiar web-based folder-and-file structure. So instead of having to travel to an archival building or finger through a filing cabinet, staff members can reach all city information with just a few mouse clicks. Authorized users can browse folders, read their descriptions, and download the files of interest. When appropriate, files can have hypertext links that lead to additional reports, supporting evidence, or related data.

Digital recordkeeping has another not-often-recognized benefit. The city is required to locate and destroy all files records more than six years old. That purging process was once messy and time-consuming. “It would take 15 people an entire week to destroy the paper files,” said Chulick, “They would come to work in their grubbies.” Now, removing old files is a simple matter of highlighting file names and pressing the “delete” button on a networked computer and those employees no longer have to put their regular responsibilities on hold for a week every year.

“This system saves one to two hours daily.”

David Chulick

IT Director
City of Gilroy, CA

eFinancePLUS+ includes:

- General Ledger
- Projects and Grants
- Budget Preparation
- Purchasing
- Vendor Bidding
- Accounts Payable
- Fixed Assets
- Warehouse Inventory
- Equipment Maintenance
- Payroll
- Personnel
- Benefits
- Employee Access Center
- Job Applicant Center
- Applicant Tracking
- Position Control
- Personnel Budgeting
- Salary Projections
- Dashboards
- Workflow Center

eCommunityPLUS+ includes:

- Utilities
- Work Orders
- Zoning and Development
- Permitting
- Code Enforcement
- Fire and Safety Inspections
- Licensing
- Miscellaneous Billing
- Alarm Registration and Billing
- Special Assessments
- Central Receipting
- Service Requests
- Parks and Recreation
- Taxes
- eGovernment Services

Making check processing automatic

Another **eCommunityPLUS+** system feature that saves money and reduces labor for the city is its ability to easily integrate to third-party automatic check processing (ACP). For Gilroy, SunGard Pentamation partner DataNET Solutions provides the integrated ACP capabilities to the SunGard Pentamation system. “With the power of ACP, Gilroy can process paper water and electric bill remittances as if they were electronic payments,” said Tom Ziencina, President of DataNET Solutions.

City clerks run the checks through a reader that captures the essential details of the checks and stubs. Then the information is automatically sent through the SunGard Pentamation system and on to the bank’s check clearing process.

Banks prefer electronic deposits, so they charge lower fees for checks deposited using ACP. “Converting to the new method, the bank reduced its check processing rates 56%,” said Gilroy Revenue Officer Irma Navarro. Gilroy’s bank charges 10½ cents to process each paper check, but only 4½ cents to process checks using ACP. Those savings go right back to the city funds. Gilroy receives between 600 and 1,000 checks per day, more than half of them can be processed via ACP.

Not only is the combined **eCommunityPLUS+** and DataNET ACP solution less expensive, the funds also become available more quickly. “We post the income on the same day that the check arrives,” said Chulick, “Even if we export the files at 5 PM, the money is in our account by 8 AM at the start of the workday. That gives us more interest on the float.”

It also helps the city increase accounting accuracy because many errors are highlighted by the system. For example, the city learns right away if a check is drawn on insufficient funds. And whenever the amount that a customer pays does not match the amount on the remittance form, the discrepancy is flagged. “If any amounts don’t match,” said Chulick, “The line item turns red on the verifier.”

The system reduces administrative work by exporting the check information in batches as lockbox files. “Before we had to manually key in a utility bill and amount, then ‘beep in’ each check with a barcode reader, one at a time,” said Chulick. Now a single clerk scans the checks in batches of 50, which significantly reduces the labor involved. “This system saves one to two hours daily.” With those extra hours, city staff members can move on to other, more pressing tasks.

“We’ve been able to do more with the same budget.”

David Chulik
IT Director
City of Gilroy, CA

Smooth integration with office software

The city has improved its workflow in other areas as well, because SunGard Pentamation’s **eCommunityPLUS+** software integrates so smoothly with common office programs such as Microsoft Excel, Access, and Word. Chulick designed many city documents, such as building permits and business license applications, as Word macro templates. The templates are then automatically populated with live data from **eCommunityPLUS+**.

Each new building permit, for example, receives its own unique permit number from the system. The number is then systematically placed on the form. “This system lets us generate permits faster and automatically archives the permit for historical purposes,” said Chulick.

Handling the growth

With the efficiencies brought about by the **eCommunityPLUS+** system, Gilroy has been able to handle its population and business increases without increasing its staff, its operating budget, or the time it takes to process requests. “We’ve been able to do more with the same budget,” said Chulick.

Today, most Gilroy city forms—from variance applications to water and sewer service requests—can be found online. Applicants must turn in the forms at appropriate city offices, but once the forms are presented, they are routed electronically in a systematic way using the SunGard Pentamation system. “We’ve been able to keep a high level of care,” said Chulick, “because we address our service needs with technology.”

For more information about **eCommunityPLUS+** visit www.ecommunityplus.com

SunGard® Pentamation, Inc.
3 West Broad Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
Phone: 610-691-3616
Toll-free: 866-905-8989
Fax: 610-861-9323
www.pentamation.com