



## Municipal Government, It's Time to get into the Technology Game

Consider yourself officially recruited. We want you to get into the game – the technology game, that is.

Technology plays a major role in serving the community. You can see this simply by looking at how various innovations have shaped municipal operations. Using barcodes and laser printers for tax bills was unheard of just 15 years ago, yet today those technologies are integral parts of the collector's office. Now neither the collector nor the taxpayer could conceive of doing their business without the aid of those tools. They have proven their value and they have become expected.

New technologies evolve all the time, and so do the expectations of your citizens. They expect you to evaluate those new technologies and apply them in ways that they find valuable. The question is then: are you doing this? Are you in the technology game or are you standing on the sidelines?

### Draw Up a Game Plan

Before you can play the game, you have to examine the playing field and come up with a game plan. In this case, that means learning what your citizens want and expect.

Consider these findings from a 2006 report by Forrester Research, Inc. titled "From eGov to iGov: What's next for lead-

ing edge governments in the digital age":

- The majority (53%) of North Americans believe that in the next 5-10 years e-government will make government services more convenient.
- The most common activity at federal websites involves downloading or printing a government form, with 78% of visitors performing that activity.
- At the state level, the most common activity performed by visitors (82%) is to renew a license or vehicle registration online.
- Visitors to government websites in the United States have been online an average of 6.3 years and have used e-commerce an average of 3.8 years, plus 49% of them presently have broadband at home.
- The "new citizen" demands interactivity and wants more choices in services, better communication and more input in governance.

### Step Up to the Plate

If you find you are not meeting the expectations of your citizens, the time to step up to the plate is now. The further behind you get in the technology game, the harder and more



expensive it will be to catch up.

Even with that knowledge, though, stepping up to the plate can seem daunting. Perhaps you think that, given your financial resources, playing the game will be impossible.

The key is to remember that you are not in this game alone. We view our role as that of coach, there to tell you that you can do this and to advise you on how.

We have strategies on how to put you in the game without breaking your budget. Understanding what you can do has never been more important.

### Find Your Position

In the technology game, there are many "positions" and each one is played a little differently. Your first step is to fig-

ure out what position you want to play. Once you've determined what you want, Point Software can "coach" you on achieving those goals to ensure your best chance of winning.

Deciding what you want is easier than you think. It starts by discussing your needs with us to develop a strategy for your success and that of your municipality.

Remember, you can't win if you don't play. Sitting on the bench is not an option. Get in the game today with the Point team.

*To arrange for a Business Process Review, contact company president James Regan at 1.800.368.9538 extension 104. We look forward to addressing the technology needs of your municipality.*



## Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
May 7-11	IAAO Course 400: Assessment Administration <i>Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO</i>	Framingham Town Hall Memorial Building Public Meeting Room 150 Concord Street Framingham, MA
May 17	CTx Member Meeting	Aqua Turf Club 556 Mulberry Street Southington, CT
June 3-9	CAAO Annual School	University of Connecticut Storrs, CT
June 10-13	MCTA Conference	Sea Crest Resort Old Silver Beach on Cape Cod 350 Quaker Road North Falmouth, MA
June 19-22	MAAO Summer Conference	Red Jacket Beach Resort 1 South Shore Drive South Yarmouth, MA

### *Including Prior B&Ls, Exemptions in Preliminary Bills*

During the first week of May, Customer Service will be sending the first-half tax billing conversion questionnaire to all quarterly towns running Point's collection system. In the past, we have noted some confusion revolving around the inclusion of prior betterments & liens and exemptions as part of the preliminary real estate bills. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- While most questions in the questionnaire are intended to be answered directly by the tax collector, the tax collector will need to communicate with the assessor's office to reply to questions A-D under Tax Bill Message and General Information. The assessor's office must indicate whether they want to include betterments & liens and/or exemptions from the prior fiscal year in the preliminary bills.
- If the assessor's office chooses to include prior betterments & liens in the preliminary bills, they must also include those betterments & liens in the legal file *and* they must provide a betterments & liens totals report. If they choose not to include prior betterments & liens in the preliminary bills, they should not include those betterments & liens in the legal file.
- If the assessor's office chooses to include prior exemptions in the preliminary bills, they must also include those exemptions in the legal file *and* they must provide an exemptions totals report. (Patriot customers must also send a separate exemption file.) If they choose not to include prior exemptions in the preliminary bills, they should not include those exemptions in the legal file.
- Prior year betterments & liens and exemptions will not appear on the preliminary bills as betterments & liens or exemptions. Instead, they will be reflected in the net tax due for the preliminary bills.

For more information on including prior betterments & liens and exemptions in the net tax due for quarterly preliminary bills, refer to IGR No. 07-205 at:

[http://www.mass.gov/Ador/docs/dls/publ/igr/2007/igr07\\_205.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Ador/docs/dls/publ/igr/2007/igr07_205.pdf)

## Tech Tips

If your computer has been sluggish lately, a fragmented hard drive volume could be the culprit. Fragmentation occurs over time as a natural result of creating/deleting files and folders and installing/uninstalling programs. Associated data becomes scattered across the volume, causing your computer's response time to suffer as it tries to locate and access that data.

For Windows 2000 and XP users, the remedy is to run Disk Defragmenter. This built-in system tool not only defragments the volume but can also analyze it beforehand to determine whether fragmentation is significant enough to merit that lengthy process. We suggest running this process after normal business hours because all system resources will be dedicated to defragmentation.

### Running Disk Defragmenter

1. Select **Start** from the taskbar.
2. Select **Programs** if you have a Windows 2000 computer or **All Programs** if you have a Windows XP computer.
3. Select **Accessories**.
4. Select **System Tools**.
5. Select **Disk Defragmenter**. Disk Defragmenter appears.
6. Click the name of the volume you want to check for fragmentation.
7. Select **Analyze**.
  - If the volume does not require defragmentation, select **Close**.
  - If defragmentation is recommended for the volume, select **Defragment**. The defragmentation process begins. When the message prompt appears informing you that defragmentation is complete, select **Close**.
8. Select **File** then select **Exit** to close the Disk Defragmenter.