

# CUSTOMER PROFILE

PUBLIC SERVICES

LAWSON AT CITY OF GREENSBORO



## **Technology Extensions Help the City of Greensboro Save Time and Money While Promoting End-User Adoption**

Lawson Design Studio, ProcessFlow and Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft® Office enable North Carolina city to maximize its Information Technology (IT) investment by increasing productivity and customizing applications to better meet departmental needs.

“Design Studio has helped us simplify complex forms by removing unused fields, adding commands to launch Crystal Reports and adding custom scripts for task information.”

**Larry Kerr, Project Director for Software Implementation,  
City of Greensboro**



## Customer Profile

The city of Greensboro has more than 230,000 residents and is the third-largest city in North Carolina. Like most city governments, Greensboro operates many distinctly different departments and service groups. It provides police, utility, road construction and maintenance services as well as managing solid waste collection, 18 fire stations, seven libraries and 3,752 acres of parks and public land. More than 2,500 employees work for city departments full-time and the city employs additional staff for seasonal or hourly work, as needed.

## Business Situation

As with most government entities, the city of Greensboro is expected to meet its business needs and provide essential public services at minimal cost. So when the city implemented an integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) system from Lawson to save time and taxpayers' dollars by automating its core business processes, Greensboro also used Lawson technology extensions to adapt and customize the ERP system to better meet its needs. Lawson's flexible solutions helped the city transition from more than three decades within a custom-written environment and strike a balance between meeting the diverse needs of its 20 departments while pursuing IT best practices.

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Project Director, Software Implementation  
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## Solution

To maximize its IT investment, Greensboro used value-added technology extensions while implementing an integrated ERP system from Lawson in 2002. Lawson Design Studio and Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office enabled the city to deliver customized solutions to police, fire safety, parks and recreation and other groups without changing a single line of application source code — a key goal of the implementation. These slight adaptations to HR, financial and procurement applications increased employee productivity by enabling them to more easily access data.

"Design Studio has helped us simplify complex forms by removing unused fields, adding commands to launch Crystal Reports and adding custom scripts for task information," said Larry Kerr, project director for the city of Greensboro's software implementation.

According to Chris Payne, assistant purchasing director, the number one benefit of Design Studio in terms of time savings was the city's ability to dramatically reduce the need for end-user training. Using Design Studio, Greensboro was able to remove all unused fields for its business processes, and rename and reorganize fields to make the application user interface resemble what end users had experienced in their previous systems. Because end users were already familiar with the format and screen progression, their learning curve was significantly reduced.

In its purchasing department, Greensboro used Design Studio to simplify the requisition entry process for more than 300 requesters using a modified Requisition (RQ10) form. By removing unused fields and tabs, organizing field order, adding push buttons to launch custom reports and creating defaults for static information, Design Studio helped the city create custom Requisition (RQ10) forms that employees can easily navigate and process more efficiently.



“Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office has been easy to use and worked smoothly from day one. Lawson’s technology tools have truly allowed us to get the most out of our ERP system.”

**Chris Payne**  
**Assistant Purchasing Director**  
**City of Greensboro**

“By using Design Studio to make these changes before implementation, we were able to ensure the system was well accepted at rollout,” said Payne. “This tool, among others, added value to our Lawson applications and helped make our initial rollout very successful!”

Greensboro further streamlined its purchasing process by linking Design Studio with ProcessFlow, an application that streamlines the steps required to obtain approvals by automatically routing requisitions and other documents along the appropriate approval channels.

ProcessFlow has helped the city streamline and control computer purchases by enabling users to evaluate requests more quickly and route them to decision makers. For capital and technical purchases (i.e. computer software, printers, peripherals, etc.), requisitions are routed to Purchasing, Budgeting and MIS, enabling all three departments to see the status of approvals. For orders under a prescribed amount, the request goes directly to purchasing. By automating this process, the city has dramatically reduced the volume of paperwork within its purchasing group and has shortened the approval cycle for these types of purchase orders by at least one day.

“With more than 500 capital and technical purchase orders processed annually using this tool, shaving one day off the approval process actually translates into a time savings of 450 days per year for the city,” said Ron Goodwin, senior buyer. “This is impressive when you consider it only took our business staff, not IT, one week to develop the ProcessFlow. This is proof that users don’t need deep Java script or computer programming knowledge to use these technology extensions well!”

When Greensboro’s area codes changed in recent years, the city’s legacy system had no efficient process for updating the new information. Staff spent countless hours manually updating several thousand vendors records affected by the change. Now, with Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office, the city has a tool that enables it to quickly address these type of data changes. Designed to increase productivity by allowing users to make ad hoc queries and mass data changes, Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office allows users to extract and upload Lawson data to and from Microsoft Office products.

As area codes change in the future, the city will be able to easily download vendor phone numbers into Excel, perform a find and replace action to make the changes and reload the corrected numbers into the Lawson system within minutes.

Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office also helped the city of Greensboro simplify payment of seasonal and occasional employees, which form a significant task force for the city. To schedule and issue paychecks for these “casual” employees, Greensboro used Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office to give department supervisors a simple screen in which they enter two data fields: the employee number and hours worked. The ERP system captures and uploads this information for each payroll cycle. This capability has saved the city approximately three days of payroll processing labor per month by eliminating time previously spent manually gathering and entering data from remote groups supervising seasonal workers.

“Lawson Add-ins for Microsoft Office has been easy to use and worked smoothly from day one,” said Payne. “Lawson’s technology tools have truly allowed us to get the most out of our ERP system.”



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