

# COUNCIL WORKSHOP ITEM

**ITEM:** Information Technology Report  
**DATE:** April 19, 2001  
**PREPARED BY:** Liangfu Wu, Director of Information Services  
**PURPOSE:** Update the Village Council with the Application of Information Technology in the Village

(An Outline for the Presentation)

## DISCUSSION

Since the early 1990s, information technology (IT) has changed our way of conducting business. The fast paced development of IT enables us to deliver services more effectively. As more obvious changes are taking place in the private sector, IT also pervades the municipal government's operation. The purpose of this presentation to summarize the application of current IT in the Village.

### I. General Use of Information Technology

Based on the latest count, the Village employs a total of 396 employees including 346 full-time and 50 part-time employees. Among these 396 employees, 379 have an Email account provided by the Village, resulting in a 96% Email use rate, which is a relatively high use rate among municipal government agencies. In addition, the Village provides 201 personal computers (PCs) for village employees. For those who do not need PCs for their regular operation, a shared PC is available in their work unit for checking Emails and receiving other work related documents as well as providing the ability to do research on the Internet for work related issues.

Most of the Village owned PCs are connected to our network, making resource sharing possible. The shared computer resources include applications, drives, directories, files and printers. As a result, the Village's computer resources are being utilized in a more effective way.

With such a high level of computer use, a revolutionary change in our office routine has been quietly taking place. For example, previously often seen interdepartmental correspondence have become simple Email messages sent to persons involved. With a simple mouse click, the document is sent and archived at both ends. In addition, with a slight change in our routine, staff has placed all Village Council related documents online. Our government operation is more transparent to our residents than ever before.

It is difficult to measure how much more effective our work is today than it was prior to IT. However, the community benefits are obvious.

### II. Introduction to Village's Network & Its Usage

1. All PCs located throughout the metropolitan area are connected via a network, constituting a

MAN (Metropolitan Area Network; see Attachment 1)

2. A standard Windows NT network is employed in the Village, and all computer applications are NT-based or NT-compatible (see Attachment 2)

In addition to her/his PC, each village user shares a portion of the network for files and printers. Each department has folders on the network for employees to share files.

Backup has been performed at different levels

An anti-virus application is deployed at both the user level and network level.

3. Standard Gateway PCs are used throughout the Village. We evaluate PC vendors on a yearly basis.

4. Outlook/Exchange: Email, calendars and other Outlook applications are shared via MEN, e.g., departmental calendars, room reservations, and many more to come.

5. VPN (Virtual Private Network) is utilized for Village staff, allowing remote access to our network resources

### **III. End-user Training and Technical Support**

Our staff trainer is providing training in a classroom environment as well as one-on-one training. Various computer classes are offered in-house. The IS Department is supporting the overall computer efforts in the Village. Proper end-user training and timely technical support result in a much more effective use of our IT resources.

### **IV. Use of the Internet**

As we are experiencing an extensive use of Email, the use of web sites has reached a point where the Internet use has become an inseparable part of our daily operation. The Village manages three major web sites: our Internet web site ([www.vil.downers-grove.il.us](http://www.vil.downers-grove.il.us)), Extranet ([www.dginfonet.org](http://www.dginfonet.org)), and our Intranet (see Attachment 3).

1. As our community Internet portal, our Internet Web site is an information service provided to the Downers Grove community containing a wide range of information from staff Email addresses, garbage pickup dates to palm version Council Meeting schedules, Metra Train schedules, etc.

The completely redesigned web site will be made public after we present it to the Village Council.

2. Extranet is a web site where operation and other types of business transactions take place, e.g., bidding, RFPs, E-permit (under construction) our Citizen Response Center, etc.

3. Our intranet is a web site used strictly for our internal operation. The design of our intranet

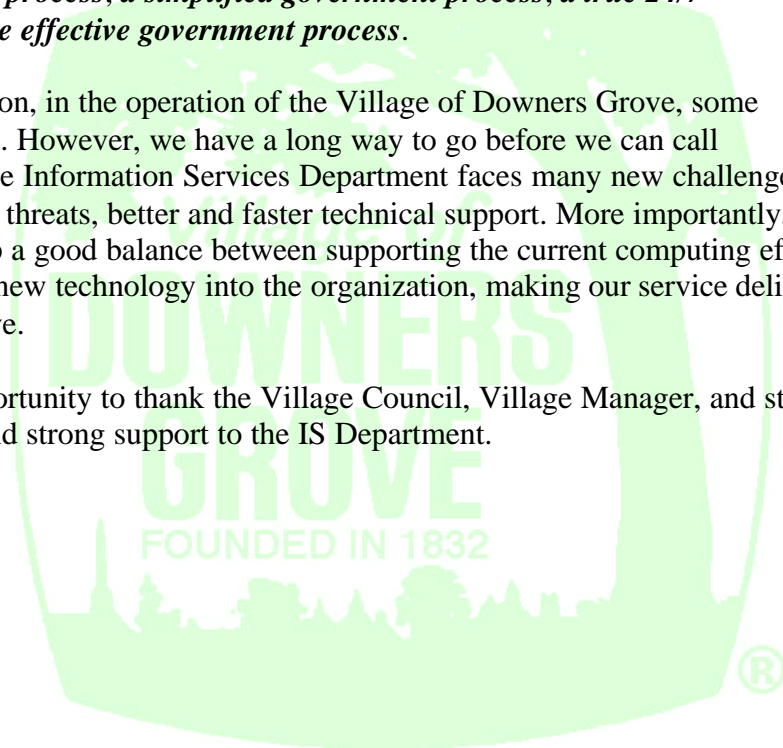
web site is to make it *a place to communicate, to do business, to get information, to be trained and to have fun!*

## V. E-government: the Future Development

The concept of “E-government” has been discussed in many trade shows, seminars, magazines, etc. However, simply deploying PCs on staff desks, or setting up a network, will not make our village an E-government. E-government is a new process powered by IT. As new IT will not change the basic functions of a local government, it will help increase the effectiveness of local government’s operation. How do we look at E-government? We see that an E-government should be *an open government process, a simplified government process, a true 24/7 government process* and *a more effective government process*.

As introduced in this presentation, in the operation of the Village of Downers Grove, some changes have been taking place. However, we have a long way to go before we can call ourselves an E-government. The Information Services Department faces many new challenges each day, e.g., viruses, security threats, better and faster technical support. More importantly, the IS staff is working hard to keep a good balance between supporting the current computing efforts of the Village and introducing new technology into the organization, making our service delivery to the community more effective.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Village Council, Village Manager, and staff for their leadership, patience and strong support to the IS Department.



# Metropolitan Area Network

Village of Downers Grove

