



Breaking Up with Paper: Lake Jackson, Texas Transforms Record Keeping with Questys

Lake Jackson, Texas, a city of approximately 28,000 residents, has been using Questys since 2000 to improve record management efficiency in the court, police, administration and building departments. This case study explores how the City had to break up with paper in order to keep history intact.

Breaking Up with Paper

Before Questys, it used to take rooms and rooms of paper to store court records - no exaggeration. Now there is just one rack of files on a wall, because the court clerks scan everything as it happens: when a case is disposed (i.e., closed), fines are paid, etc. Even receipts are scanned in before handed back to the payer. Documents are kept in the system for five years, after disposition and payment, then purged.

The court department isn't the only one who broke up with paper when the City implemented Questys for its electronic management of documents in 2000. In fact, Lake Jackson's city administration and accounts payable (AP) departments were the first to adopt the new system. AP clerks used to spend an inordinate amount of time throughout their days answering inquiries from fellow employees, such as, Did an invoice get paid? What was the amount of the last invoice for the office supply store? When was this late fee applied?

"Prior to Questys, AP clerks were practically pulling their hair out," says MIS Manager Trisha Huffman, who was working at the City when Questys was first adopted. Now they can focus on higher priority initiatives, since employees can simply perform a query in Questys to answer these questions themselves.

The police department was a late adopter, starting in 2010 to add records to Questys in real-time, as they happened. Now the department is scanning in older documents. They have very different retention policies based on case particulars. Questys makes it easy to enter a custom retention date for each record.

About Lake Jackson

Lake Jackson is a city in Brazoria County, Texas, within the Greater Houston metropolitan area. As of the 2020 census, the city population was 28,177.

The city was built in the early 1940s as a planned community, designed by Alden B. Dow of Midland, Michigan, for workers in support of a new plant of the Dow Chemical Company, which his father owned.

The City of Lake Jackson was incorporated on March 14, 1944. It is referred to as the "City of Enhancement."



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The Power of Integration

When Lake Jackson's municipal court decided to go paperless, it wanted something that worked with the City's existing Court system, Naviline, by CentralSquare. Questys had a strong reputation for integration, so the decision was easy.

Questys Connect is an easy-to-use integration tool provides a seamless application-level integration with your business applications, with literally just a few mouse clicks.

Instead of weeks or months, most customers complete integrations in a matter of hours. And because there is no custom coding needed, you can upgrade your other business applications without worrying how it will affect Questys.

Visit us at municipalsoftware.com/Questys to learn more.

1.800.665.5647
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The Power of Keywords

Records go all the way back to March of 1944, when the City was incorporated. Before Questys, if you wanted to look up something that was discussed at a prior meeting or you needed to find a specific ordinance, you had to search through a manual log of council minutes. Now you just type the keywords into Questys and voilà, all council meeting minutes or ordinances with those keywords come up. Instead of hours spent reading piles of paper, you can make an exhaustive search in minutes to find out what the council had to say about a certain item.



Due to Questys' extensive search capabilities and the fact that City employees can redact documents directly in the system, they're better able to serve the public, especially when responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Trisha says FOIA requests help employees keep tabs on the "moods in the city," by tracking trends in the types of requests generated.

Keeping History Intact

One of the biggest concerns for the City of Lake Jackson is the impact of environmental factors on paper records. The city is located just 15 minutes from the coast, where high humidity and heat can cause records to deteriorate. Questys was used to scan in historical records, including permits and planning documents, and made it easy for staff to search for information on emergency incidents, such as floods and hurricanes, for planning purposes.

Permits are considered applicable for the life of the building. As long as the building is still standing, the department must maintain a history of all permits applied for that piece of land. Now, City staff can search for permit numbers, addresses, etc. and get to the relevant information in seconds, it's so easy to find.

Security and Support

One thing Trisha really appreciates about Questys is its security and support. She especially likes the task-oriented security. *"We can apply tasks to individual profiles so that they have access to the appropriate records within the system,"* she explains. *"It's so much easier to manage on the back end."*

There are a multitude of options for getting paper documents into your electronic document management system, from batch scanning to bulk importing. Questys is there to support customers the whole way through. *"We had five big projects to complete and the Questys team held my hand through the first two,"* Trisha says, *"until I was ready to take the reins."*

Worth the Effort, Worth the Investment

Questys Document Management System transformed the way Lake Jackson stored and managed records. From streamlined record storage and improved departmental efficiency to effective search capabilities and historical preservation, Questys has made it easy for City employees to serve the public without interruptions.