

Stafford County, Virginia

Benefits of Manatron CAMA Displayed in Historic County

Ease of Use, Software Enhancements, Results

Stafford County Virginia is a dynamic and growing county that boasts of a long and storied history. Capitan John Smith was one of the first to explore Stafford and map its rivers in 1609. Legend has it that George Washington chopped down his father's cherry tree on the bank of the Rappahannock River in Stafford County.

Today, Stafford has become one of the fastest growing counties in the country, consistently ranking in the top ten nationally in growth rate. This rampant growth has presented the County's appraisal staff with many challenges. The Real Estate Department of the Commissioner of the Revenue's office consists of 19 employees and conducts County-wide reassessments every two years.

Early in 2000 it became clear to the County's appraisal staff that if they were going to continue to run as efficiently it needed to convert to a modern Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system that would allow them to take advantage of many new technologies and methods. After reviewing CAMA systems in the market, Stafford County chose Manatron CAMA as their new system because it offered the capabilities they were searching for and was emerging as the system of choice in Virginia.

In May of 2002, during training, the staff met their first challenge: producing values for the County's supplementary tax bills. The actual billing would be produced in the old billing

system but by trending values in the new CAMA system the County was able to smoothly move through this process.

The next hurdle, in the spring of 2003, was to produce a bill file with Manatron CAMA. Many hours were spent with the Manatron team and a module was developed within the system that would calculate tax bills and meet the County's specific requirements.

The County's 2004 reassessment was the first reassessment on Manatron CAMA. Naturally they were a bit nervous, specifically about moving into the residential models and the land engine. The thought was that the set-up time and learning curve would be too great. Fortunately, Manatron CAMA provides the tools to make the process as easy as possible for the user. The first step was to set the land engine to price 480 neighborhoods and over 43,000 parcels. The County then priced all residential improvements using the Manatron CAMA models. Utilizing the robust Manatron CAMA analysis tools, the County was able to make the appropriate neighborhood and house type adjustments to ensure accurate values.

The results were better than the County ever expected. The

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countywide C.O.D. (coefficient of dispersion) was under 8.0 and the assessment to sales ratio came in at 90%. Using Manatron CAMA to complete an entire reassessment cycle, the County was able to build the foundation that will allow their office to succeed well into the future.

