

CUSTOMER SUCCESS



Hamblen County, Tennessee, Modernizes With Sage FAS Gov

Some of the deeds in Hamblen County, Tennessee, date from the days of Davy Crockett, its most famous native son. So assigning a value to fixed assets owned by the county is no easy task. Since its founding after the Civil War, its fixed assets have all been tracked the old-fashioned way—on paper.

That all changed in 1999, when the county passed legislation that consolidated its accounts payable, payroll and other accounting functions into a newly formed finance department. At that time, Hamblen County issued a formal request for proposal (RFP) and conducted research on the Internet to evaluate automated fixed asset solutions.

“Sage FAS Gov Fixed Assets with FAS Gov Asset Accounting and FAS Report Writer were the most user-friendly products around,” says Amanda Simerly, finance director. “We looked at several products used by other counties in Tennessee, but found they were tied to specific GL packages or accounting programs. We use proprietary software, and therefore needed the flexibility Sage FAS Gov provides.”

Sifting Through Centuries of Records

Existing records had been maintained manually, “If we were lucky,” Simerly says. Many departments did not have complete information, and had not updated their fixed asset data in years. To create a fixed asset database in the new software, Simerly asked department heads to list everything in their office they could touch that was worth \$5,000 or more.

“Valuing new equipment was easy,” she says. “But how do you put a price on things like the courthouse, built in 1870? Or our 415 miles of roads? We had to dig through old archives for deeds, make sure that we located all the pieces of property we actually owned, and then decide how to capitalize them. Many of the addresses were from the days when we had only one street in town, and referred to landmarks that have long since vanished.”

Since 2000, Hamblen County has used Sage FAS Gov to store data on fixed assets like roads, bridges, furniture, fixtures, machinery, vehicles, buildings, leasehold improvements, computer equipment, software, and even construction in progress. “The Sage FAS Gov solution is wonderful,” says Simerly. “I can ask very specific questions of the database and get the exact information I need, like depreciation on all of our roads, equipment in a single location, or items purchased in a single year. It’s fast, easy and incredibly flexible.”

Customer:

Hamblen County

Industry:

County government

Location:

Morristown, Tennessee

Number of Locations: Three

Number of Employees: 200

System:

Sage FAS Gov 100 Fixed Assets

- FAS Gov 100 Asset Accounting
- FAS Report Writer

CHALLENGE

Comply with new regulations to centralize, capitalize and enhance control of fixed assets owned by the County, and automate county-wide records that had always been maintained manually.

SOLUTION

Sage FAS Gov Asset Accounting now provides complete database of all County assets over \$5,000, and Sage FAS Report Writer allows flexible, customizable reporting.

RESULTS

Fixed asset audits now are completed in a few minutes rather than several days; county avoided spending \$40,000 on outside consultants to set up capitalization and depreciation infrastructure.

Answers for Auditors

The new tools are popular throughout the county's departments. "Our auditors just love Sage FAS Gov," Simerly notes. "Whatever they ask of me, I can give it to them. Whereas our audit of fixed assets used to take several days, we can now do the whole thing in a few minutes."

She says Hamblen County's department heads like the new software, too. "I can forward asset lists by department or location, and ask for updates or disposals. That capability makes it easy for everyone to stay current."

Hamblen County saved money by implementing Sage FAS Gov themselves. "Other counties in the state have spent upwards of \$40,000 hiring consultants to create and install fixed asset capitalization and depreciation programs," Simerly comments. "We avoided a similar expenditure by using Sage FAS Gov. The product is so easy!"

The only issue Simerly ran into was that Sage FAS Gov depreciated assets for up to 100 years—not enough for an organization with Hamblen County's longevity. She contacted Sage Software, and to her delight, they incorporated capabilities for longer fixed asset lifespans in the next product upgrade.

Because fixed assets were not carefully tracked before implementation of Sage FAS Gov, Simerly says it is not possible to quantify benefits of the new product. Nevertheless, she experiences plenty of qualitative improvements. "Sage FAS Gov has saved me lots of headaches at the end of the year—when we're supposed to roll up depreciable assets into the financial statement," she says. "The software is so good that I sleep better at night."

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Amanda Simerly
Finance Director
Hamblen County, Tennessee



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