IBM

e-business at regulatory agencies – Maryland leads nation.

What used to take weeks, now takes only minutes and can be done any time of the day or night. Applying for, renewing or modifying a professional/occupational license in the State of Maryland is now accomplished simply and speedily through the use of the nation's first Internet-based, realtime, electronic licensing system.

The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) used to be faced with a massive paper storm that consumed their staff, but today, thanks to e-business solutions expertise, they are providing timely service to those they regulate and are moving staff to more productive tasks.

"Today, the [real estate] industry can only sing the [licensing] system's praises. It's fast, efficient, convenient and inexpensive."

– Mary Antoun, Executive VP, Maryland Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

The State of Maryland's new licensing system resulted from an initiative undertaken with IBM's Global Government Industry Development and Solutions Center (*www. government.ibm.com*) to enable 200,000 professionals to renew their licenses through the Internet.

The response to the new service delivery channel for real estate agents, engineers, architects, CPAs, land surveyors, interior designers, landscape architects and other professionals has been astounding. In a little more than one year, over 50 percent of all licensees – including 76 percent of CPAs, 60 percent of professional engineers and 57 percent of real estate agents – are using this Internet solution as their preferred service delivery channel. The professional simply signs onto the Internet

Application	Online ocupational and professional licensing
Business Benefits	Improved customer satisfaction; decreased cost of processing paper; balanced workflow; over 50% usage in one year
Software	IBM® DB2® for AS/400® IBM DB2 Connect IBM Net.Data®
Hardware	IBM AS/400®
Services	IBM Global Government Industry Development and Solutions Center

The State of Maryland enables professionals to apply for or renew licenses, using the nation's first Internet-based, realtime, electronic licensing system.

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using a Personal Identification Number (PIN) and assigned registration number, answers some basic license renewal questions and pays for the fees with a credit card. The next day his/her license is in the mail.

Start small, grow fast
The system grew out of Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening's statewide push for departments and agencies to find new ways of using technology to improve customer service and streamline operations.

At the same time, the real estate industry was lobbying for a new and faster way of licensing its brokers and agents. "Realtors have always been the most complicated group to license," says Mary Antoun, executive vice-president of the Maryland Association of REALTORS, Inc.. Each renewal required at least five supporting documents, generating thousands of pieces of paper. The result – long waits and cranky realtors. "Today," she says, "the industry can only sing the system's praises. It's fast, efficient, convenient and inexpensive."

From the project's inception the strategy was to start small before expanding the service to the 40 occupations that are regulated by the state's 18 licensing commissions and boards. With that in mind, IBM and Maryland's DLLR teamed up to develop the system in stages, beginning with the Maryland Real Estate Commission, which went live in December 1997. This has been followed by 15 more boards and commissions during the last 16 months. The remaining two commissions will become operational in May, 1999.

Broad suite of applications provides superior service
In addition to the individual and corporate renewal applications, IBM wrote and deployed nine other applications for each

of the boards and commissions: original individual and corporate licensure, original reciprocal license, original temporary license, original limited license, verification of licensure, certification of licensure, interim changes, status changes and reinstatement.

The system also gives the public instant access to the licensing status and past disciplinary actions of a practitioner.

When the project began, the department had existing AS/400-DB2 applications to support the internal business functions of the boards and the commissions. Leveraging the existing database, IBM created a link through the Internet into the department's internal database and wrote applications for licensees to input their data directly into the system. This eliminates the need for government staff to reenter the data already submitted by the licensee and potentially make errors. IBM also linked DLLR's new system to Cybercash, a leading merchant provider of secured electronic credit card payments.

When clients access DLLR's Netscape server, a HTML front end is presented and Perl Common Gateway Interface application code is executed to preprocess the licensing request. When payment is required, credit card information is supplied over a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) session to the Cybercash service. Finally, the back-end DB2 for AS/400 databases are updated using IBM DB2 Connect middleware. When the public accesses the public portion of the system, they are viewing DB2 data via browser by executing IBM Net.Data server queries.

The new system has taken Maryland firmly to the forefront of governments using technology to transform the way it serves the public. IBM plans to help other governments do the same with its electronic forms processing product.

For more information, please contact your IBM marketing representative.

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For more information on Maryland DLLR, visit:
www.dllr.state.md.us

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