

## CASE STUDY: TOWNSHIP OF EVESHAM, NEW JERSEY

# Point-and-Click Access to Police and Municipal Services

Evesham Township serves a population that's 45,000 and growing. Following an initial Laserfiche installation in the Clerk's Office, the user base has grown to more than 60 employees in eight departments, including the Police Department. Dozens of online forms also push the convenience and efficiency of Laserfiche out to engaged citizens.

### Big Innovations from a Small Department

Evesham IT Manager Lisa Ott-Casassa and her staff of two support 150 Township users with services like networking, mobile phones and police body cameras. She's a big fan of Laserfiche, pursuing projects as her busy workload allows. "It's amazing what you can do. I'm not a programmer, but I like to learn and see what I can create," she said. However as the following examples show, she's been able to accomplish a lot with workflows, forms and integrations.

### "Ask Evesham" Service Request Solution

For instance, when Township leaders asked all departments to tighten their budgets, Ott-Cassasa created an "AskEvesham" application based on Laserfiche Forms to replace a standalone "311" software system.

Seven buttons representing the most-used service requests currently greet visitors to the Township's AskEvesham web page. The buttons open Laserfiche Forms, which feature drop-down menus with sub-categories, making it easy to navigate to what you need.

Selecting the "Ask A Question" button offers 13 service areas to choose from, plus "Unknown." If you select "Township Clerk" another drop-down menu offers 12 choices ranging from "Animal Control" to "Voting/Elections," plus "Other."

Ott-Casassa had automation as well as user convenience in mind when she designed the choices. As she explained, "Based on the user selection, Laserfiche looks in a SQL data base for the email address of the employee who's responsible for that particular service area and automatically sends the question or service request to that person. Later the system marks it closed. It can also store notations of what they did to handle it."

AskEvesham has logged around 20,000 hits with 6,800 forms submitted since going live, reducing the incoming telephone call load, making connecting with citizens less expensive and more versatile.

The screenshot shows the ASKEVESHAM web application interface. At the top, the title "ASKEVESHAM" is displayed in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, a message reads: "Please use the options on the left or below to request services, or inquire about any municipal matter. By using these tools the Township Administration will be better able to identify emerging issues and develop community priorities." Below this message, a "Thank You" message is displayed. The main content area features seven blue buttons with white text, arranged in two rows. The first row contains four buttons: "Ask A Question", "Appliance Metal Pickup", "Automated Trash or Recycle Can Repair", and "Brush Collection Request". The second row contains three buttons: "Report A Pothole", "Report An Issue", and "Zoning Complaint".

### Online Self-Service for Police Matters

Ott-Casassa created another web-based Laserfiche Forms solution for the Evesham Police Department that digitizes many routine reports and service requests. Here residents can:

- Register a private home or business video surveillance camera to assist with criminal detection, investigation and prosecution
- File a report of a crime from anywhere with Internet access
- Fill out a feedback form to register compliments, complaints and comments on the performance of Evesham police officers
- Submit an Open Public Records Act (OPRA) request for a police report
- Sign up to request that the police check on a house while away on vacation
- Register a bicycle to facilitate its recovery and return if ever lost or stolen

While the app can be accessed from any Internet browser, the Police Department provides a dedicated iPad kiosk in its lobby to allow walk-ins to quickly tap their way through paperwork without creating paper. It's become a best practices model, according to Ott-Casassa, who said, "Delegations from multiple Pennsylvania and New Jersey police departments have come to look at it."

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## Streamlined Records Request Processing

Ott-Casassa also digitized how the Police Department manages incoming electronic OPRA requests. After requestors complete the online Laserfiche Form and click "Submit," Laserfiche Workflow notifies Katherine Corbett, the Department's Risk Management Coordinator. "I get an email with a link to the electronic form," she explained. "I assign the task to myself, review the request and accept it. Laserfiche creates a folder coded with last name, first name, date and number code and stores the request."

As Corbett pulls and copies documents to fulfill the request, she scans them into Laserfiche for retention. "As part of my due diligence, I store all the documents involved, including exempt records such as juvenile and medical records that cannot be shared publicly," she said. "When I'm done processing, Laserfiche records the completion date and any fees, removes the request from my active screen and changes the folder status to closed."

According to her current mid-year tally, Corbett had processed 354 OPRA requests. "Requests can run up to hundreds of pages. Because we use Laserfiche as our repository we can shred our copies of requests following State Archive approval," Corbett said. "That gets rid of boxes and boxes of paper and saves lots of space."

## Simplified Records Management

"It is hard to get people off paper," Ott-Casassa observed. "I'm trying to shift more processes to electronic formats with Forms so records are less likely to come out as paper." In the meantime, she continues to make progress on the document management front as back file conversion continues.

"We have paper files everywhere — sheds, basements, attics, storerooms," said Ott-Casassa. Evesham originally registered with the State of New Jersey for Image Processing System compliance back in 2009. "Our Laserfiche images are certified as legal second copies by DORES (the state's Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services)," she explained. In January 2016, she obtained Paper Destruction Certification for the Township and Police Laserfiche Servers, opening the door to purging legacy paper records.

While replacing paper records with Laserfiche storage saves space and cost, streamlined records management compliance is another big benefit for Evesham. "As we archive finished folders, we use a Laserfiche Workflow and the Records Management Module to fill the repository folders and apply the correct retention schedule to the stored documents," said Ott-Casassa. In New Jersey that involves more than 60 series of retention schedules for county and local records. "Going forward, in the Community Development Department, for example, Laserfiche recognizes a variety of planning and zoning document types and defines them for storage against their retention schedules." DoD-secure storage with retention compliance helps protect the Township against the risks of ever being unable to produce a record.

## More Automation On the Horizon

Ott-Casassa credits her success to VAR General Code's ongoing support. "Their Help Desk is amazing. They put up with me calling almost every day," she said. No doubt Ott-Casassa was exaggerating, but as she ramps up to develop a Human Resources application process based on Laserfiche Forms and Workflows, she expects the technical partnership to continue to help her improve how Evesham does business.



Photo Provided by Evesham Township Police Dept.

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