



Parking Ticket Problems Solved with Trimble Recon

Issuing a parking ticket shouldn't be difficult. Collecting the fine shouldn't be prohibitive. Tracking the process shouldn't be exasperating. And in this technological world, no one should have to record data by hand.

Winnipeg's woes

In 2003, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba, had several parking facility and resource issues that created time-consuming and expensive problems and made parking confusing for its citizens and its city workers. It was almost impossible to determine who was in control of each city asset that was parking-related: the city property department handled parking lots, while parking meters were handled by the city works department and parking enforcement was handled by the city police department. The entire parking program for the city needed restructuring.

During the following year, the Winnipeg Parking Authority (WPA) was formed. According to David C. Hill, Chief Operating Officer of the WPA, "We needed to harmonize everything. We created a single organization that now worked to help the city rather than get in the way of things."

Solution found

With a unified agency in place, the next step was to automate the parking system. The first step was to purchase 50 Trimble Recon handheld computers with real-time wireless communications. The Recons, loaded with T2 Flex software, allowed field officers to lookup relevant data and issue citations in the field, with the data immediately entered into the system and transferred to the office.

Perhaps best of all, implementation was easy. According to Hill, it took just two weeks to fully train 12 people who had no prior experience with Trimble Recon solution.

Not only was the WPA suddenly able to issue citations and automatically log data, they could now generate bills for outstanding unpaid tickets. With the Recon system, they issued 81,000 long-overdue invoices and within a relatively short while had recuperated \$520,000 in back fines.



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“People are now much more aware that tickets cannot be ignored. They no longer can merely wait for it to be lost in the system after a couple of months. Flex allows us to get much more clarity on the information we have and regain control of parking.”

Current annual revenue for WPA is \$12 million with a goal of \$15 million in five years. This extra revenue will be used to boost the level of customer service and the overall physical condition of properties, such as renovating existing parking structures. Previously, when control was given to three different departments, any money that was earned would go elsewhere and not into parking. Therefore, many parking facilities were not maintained and updated as needed.

In the field

Before implementing their new system, the city’s estimated 160,000 annual citations were manually written in the field in triplicate. It was easy for citations to be misplaced and even easier for customers to not pay due to the lengthy, imprecise process. One copy of each citation was filed then sent to the police department where it was scanned and stored in a large image bank. Then, once the citation number was entered by hand in the system, there was no way of finding a record of the ticket without the citation number.

With the wireless capabilities of the Trimble Recon, field officers routinely save valuable time on the job and get more done in a day. They can cover more parking lot territory and be more effective on their routes. The information they receive from central databases is accurate and timely, and the citation data they send back transfers immediately without wires or cables.

Since the Trimble Recon is built to meet military standards for ruggedness (MIL-STD-810F), parking officers are able to work year-round. The Recon is ready to go in any weather. Featuring a rechargeable NiMH battery pack that lasts all day long, plus persistent data storage, field personnel keep working the whole shift, securely logging in data.

In the office

The office staff can rely completely on the accuracy of the data transferred by the Trimble Recon handheld computers. Back in the office, the T2 Flex software system enables better overall management of all WPA data.

Reports generated. Time saved. Citations invoiced. Fines received. Problems solved.