

2008 NASCIO Recognition Awards

Category: Digital Government

Government to Business (G to B)

SC DNR Point of Sale Licensing System

State of South Carolina



Executive Summary

In South Carolina, as in other areas throughout the country, dramatic changes in technology are taking place on a seemingly daily basis. These advances have had the effect of ushering in a new age of governmental services in which many activities are now conducted electronically through the World Wide Web. These services, commonly referred to as eGovernment services, have become an integral part of citizen-to-government interaction and have led to increased efficiency for agencies, businesses and individuals alike.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Point of Sale Licensing System is one such eGovernment service, positively affecting a rapidly growing segment of the population. Through this innovative system, purchasing a hunting or fishing license in the Palmetto State has become remarkably easier for consumers while also allowing for enhanced reporting capabilities that will save time and resources for DNR employees.

South Carolina sells more than 700,000 hunting and fishing licenses each year to residents and out-of-state hunters and fishermen. Through the Point of Sale System, licenses can now be purchased directly via the internet through SC.gov, the official Web site of the State of South Carolina, by phone and at authorized point-of-sale agents using the recreational licensing system implemented by the state in October 2006.

There are more than 230 authorized Internet point-of-sale agents across the state, including Wal-mart, K-mart and Dick's Sporting Goods. The new DNR Point of Sale (POS) system is designed to improve the sale of hunting and fishing licenses across the state, while allowing license retailers to sell an unlimited quantity of all license types without pre-paying for licenses. All recreational license types, except lifetime licenses, shrimp baiting, antlerless doe tags, and non-game fishing tags are available for sale.

This new system is equipped with extensive reporting capabilities that allow agents to view detailed sales and void reports and provides easy user management. The Internet POS system enables sales agents and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources employees to perform their jobs without having to focus extensive time and effort on license sales.

The multi-channel service was built at no cost to taxpayers through a partnership between the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and SC.gov. The service has been so well received that the Department of Natural Resources will be implementing the POS licensing system statewide by June 2009. After June 2009, POS agents will no longer sell licenses manually which will result in 100% adoption of the online service.

C. Description of the Business Problem and Solution

Business Problem

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR) allows citizens to obtain hunting and fishing licenses via the Internet, various retailers (Wal-Mart, K-Mart, etc.) or via a call center through outsourced services provided by an outside vendor. DNR was seeking a replacement for these services that expired with the vendor contract in October 2006.

Reporting capabilities provided by the previous vendor to DNR were very limited. Sales data collected by the vendor was transferred to DNR nightly through a batch file and updated in the DNR database. In addition, point of sale agents had to prepay for licenses they anticipated selling and physically maintain license information.

Description of Solution

The South Carolina Recreational Licensing System, including the Internet Point of Sale (POS) channel, was implemented in October 2006 in compliance with Section 508 compliance directives. This innovative system was built at no cost to taxpayers through a partnership between the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and SC.gov, the State of South Carolina's official Web site. This portal was built and is managed by South Carolina Interactive, a Columbia-based subsidiary of the eGovernment firm NIC which partners with the state under contract with the South Carolina Budget and Control Board's Division of the Chief Information Officer (CIO).

Through the new system, POS agents now have a simplified licensing application for selling licenses as well as for verifying financial information regarding the sales of these licenses. There are no required changes to agent's hardware. The Internet POS licensing system allows the issuance of instant credentials that can be enforced by DNR. Sales data collected by the POS agent is transferred real-time and updated in the DNR database which alleviates the authorized agent from having to back-up sales data and maintain the batch file job.

The new POS licensing system provides DNR with increased abilities including the ability to:

- Manage licenses
- Credit and debit POS accounts
- Void POS licenses
- View POS sales and voids
- Manage POS agent and corporate accounts
- Broadcast communication to POS agents
- Manage POS supply requests.

DNR and SC.gov collaborated to provide on-site and computer based training for POS agents. A POS User Guide is made available to all POS agents and can be used to review the Point of Sale application screen by screen and provide directions to assist users in navigating the system. It also provides indexed terms to give users a reference guide in finding important keywords throughout the manual. A Frequently Asked Questions section is included in the Appendices and is separated into relevant topics, which readers should find useful in locating information.

The Point of Sale User Guide also comes with a training CD that offers video clips of each step in the application. The navigation of actual screens has been recorded with accompanying audio instructions. The steps in the guide are referenced throughout the CD.

D. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government

Benefit to Citizens

The application allows DNR customers to continue to purchase hunting and fishing licenses through the channels to which they are already accustomed. The POS licensing system is accessible and the commission fee is reduced resulting in cost savings to the end user.

Benefit to Businesses

POS agents have a simplified application for selling licenses and verifying financial information regarding the sales of these licenses. The licensing application makes the licensing process quicker and easier for retailers. The Internet POS licensing system allows assigned level of access to the system that improves management of license sales and reporting.

The Internet POS licensing system provides the following functionality:

- License Management
 - License Sales
 - Void Licenses
 - Reprint Licenses
 - Print Duplicate Licenses
- Reporting Tools
 - Sales Sweeps
 - ACH Sweeps
 - Voided License Report
- User Management
- Order Supplies

The licensing system does not require POS agents to pre-pay for licenses they plan to sell resulting in a process improvement with the new system. POS agents no longer have to keep specific licensing paper on hand and physically store license information.

Benefits to the State

The new licensing application is a process improvement in that data entry screens mirror state hunting and fishing laws and regulations, reports are simplified and user-friendly and sales information is directly in the DNR hunting and fishing license database.

Reporting capabilities provided by the previous vendor to DNR were very limited. Sales data collected by the vendor was transferred to DNR nightly through a batch file and updated in the DNR database. Now, sales data collected by the POS agent is transferred real-time and updated in the DNR database.

The new licensing system provides DNR with a robust administrative tool for license management, POS credits, debits and voids, POS sales reports, POS agent and corporation management, broadcast communication to POS agents, POS supply management as well as functionality relating to internet and call center sales.

South Carolina provides 24 hour support to DNR and POS agents. The licensing system has a dedicated server purchased and maintained by South Carolina Interactive.

E. Benefits realized by Service Recipients, Taxpayers, Agency or State

The tangible financial impact of the DNR POS licensing system includes:

- Cost avoidance for initial application development and training: \$330,000
- Cost avoidance for ongoing maintenance and upgrades: \$100,000
- Reduced convenience/commission fee to end user
- DNR uses agent bank account information provided by POS agents to collect the revenue for licenses sold minus the agent fee.

The intangible benefits of the DNR POS licensing system include:

- Transferability of data - Internet POS sales data integrates to centralized database that also contains information from online sales and call center sales.
- Instant enforcement capabilities for DNR law enforcement.
- Funds are deposited into the DNR bank account in less time.
- Quality improvements in customer service.
- Better training opportunities for POS agents.

State Investment: Zero Dollars.

Results:

- Through May 18, 2008, the DNR POS licensing system has processed 435,028 transactions and \$8,268,481.50 in license fees.
- The Department of Natural Resources will be implementing the POS licensing system statewide by June 2009.
- After June 2009, POS agents will no longer sell licenses manually which will result in 100% adoption of the online service.