



## Flexibility and Ease-of-Use of FootPrints® Enables City of Ventura Centralize IT Help Desk and Automate Many Departmental Processes

Customer:  
City of Ventura, CA

The IT Division serves the technical needs of hundreds of employees that deliver the vital services to more than 105,000 permanent residents and millions of visitors to its beaches, museums, and parks every year.

The City's Challenges:

- Implement an IT Help Desk to automate support for 750 city employees . . . in three months
- Track and manage time and city assets for planning and budget purposes and to effectively manage inter-departmental billing (charge-backs) within the IT Division

FootPrints Products:

- UniPress FootPrints<sup>®</sup>

Main Applications:

Primary Application:

- IT Help Desk for City Employees

Secondary Applications:

- Engineering Help Desk
- Police and Fire Department Help Desk
- Facilities Management
- Asset Discovery and Tracking
- Project Management (For Graphics Department)

Key Features for Ventura:

- Auto ticket routing and escalation
- Two way email management
- LDAP Integration
- Multiple project support
- Custom reports
- Asset discovery and tracking
- Self-administration and customization

Organizational Benefits:

- Reduced number (and duplication) of service requests across multiple departments
- Cost savings

Recognized as "One of America's Most Livable Communities" by the National Press Club in Washington D.C., the City of Ventura, California is no longer one of the state's best kept secrets. Founded in 1782, Ventura today strives to provide exceptional service to its 105,000 permanent residents and millions of visitors each year. Technology is a critical factor in the overall success of the city's service delivery efforts, and Ventura's Information Technology (IT) department is responsible for providing support to all city departments and it also supports citizen response operations.

### The Challenge

In 2001, Ventura's IT Division faced a major challenge. The city's Administrative Services Department had just informed them that within three months, it needed to implement an internal help desk system to track and manage technology-related service requests for 750 city employees. As part of this mandate, the IT Division also needed to automatically monitor its time and assets for budget and planning purposes. This capability would also be used to efficiently charge out its technical services to other city departments.

Beginning the project, the IT Division conducted an internal audit to see what systems were already in place, and if they can be applied to this new mandate. The city had numerous home-grown legacy systems across several departments, most of which were outdated and difficult to maintain. The IT Division quickly made the choice to shift to a single, web-based solution to automate their help desk. This new system would centrally manage all technical support requests received via phone, email and the Internet, and accurately track time and IT assets for budgeting and charge-back purposes.

According to Tom Fratello, the IT Division's systems analyst, the plan was to move IT toward a service-oriented organization. "We wanted a web-based system for a number of reasons—for its relatively painless deployment and for its ease-of-use," Mr. Fratello said. "It had to be a system where anybody could log in from anywhere in the city, and be in a position to solve problems. We didn't want to have to install, update, and manage a system that would need to reside on our team's desktops."



PULL QUOTE: "After we went through the FootPrints' demo, we just looked at each other and said, 'this is the one.' It just seemed right, but more importantly, I knew I could deploy FootPrints myself, whereas Network Associates was going to require that we have an integrator or SQL Server expert that we didn't have at that time." —Tom Fratello, systems analyst for Ventura IT Division

### The Approach

The search for a 100% web-based system began in the summer of 2001 when Mr. Fratello began looking at 40 different products. "I looked in depth at 10 of them to the point of sitting down with a help desk person to go through each of the demos. I rated each and we ended up with just two products that stood above the others."

The ultimate choice was between Network Associates' Magic Service Desk and UniPress Software's FootPrints®. Out of a possible 10 points, Mr. Fratello rated both products a "10." "The next best product was an eight and the rest were too much of a step down," he said. "There were products that weren't even finished. They had great marketing, but when it came time to look at the products, the features weren't quite there yet."

Mr. Fratello compared his choosing FootPrints to house hunting. "After looking at so many choices, you intuitively know it's the right one when you finally see it," he said. "After we went through the FootPrints demo, we just looked at each other and said, 'this is the one.' It just seemed right, but more importantly, I knew I could deploy FootPrints myself, whereas Network Associates was going to require that we have a dedicated integration or SQL Server expert that we didn't have at that time."

The three-month window for purchasing and implementing a help desk system was quickly closing, so being able to deploy it himself was crucial to Mr. Fratello. He installed FootPrints and the first trouble-ticket was submitted on a Thursday. "By the following Monday, we were using it consistently," he said. "The installation was nearly perfect."

### The Solution

In January 2002, Mr. Fratello and his team deployed FootPrints on their Microsoft® Windows 2000 platform, running on a Windows® IIS web server and a Microsoft® SQL Server 2000 database. They also linked FootPrints to their Microsoft® Exchange email server and LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) directory infrastructure to automate ticket routing and escalation processes from within the help desk. The IT Division initially deployed FootPrints to power its 47-agent IT help desk responsible for supporting 750 of



the city's 900 employees. PC, network, and telecom service issues made up the volume of all in-bound requests. In addition to this critical operation, the system's multi-project capability has enabled Mr. Fratello to track other request-oriented processes at no additional cost, such as:

- The IT Help Desk —Fifteen agents in the IT Division support 750 city employees, who typically call in problems or submit them via email or the Internet. Technical requests range from PC and application support to network and telecom problems.
- Asset Discovery and Tracking —The IT Division uses FootPrints Asset Management to automate PC and network assets in order to understand what they are supporting, and determine infrastructure needs. This information is particularly useful to plan and budget for upgrades, etc.
- Project Management and Billing —Real-time, customizable graphical reports and metrics enable the IT Division to track time in multiple projects and calculate billings to other departments.

After deploying FootPrints to manage its IT-related help desk, Mr. Fratello created several projects for other departmental needs, including Facilities, Traffic Engineering, Graphics, and Public Safety. FootPrints now supports multiple departments, and has been instrumental in streamlining a broad range of processes, such as:

- Police and Fire Department Help Desks  
Ventura's police and fire departments use FootPrints to manage their own help desk operations to manage IT issues, as well as equipment maintenance, dispatch service requests, and resource requisitions.
- Engineering Help Desk  
Seven people within the engineering department use FootPrints to centrally track and manage all requests that fall outside the realm of technology (e.g., malfunctioning traffic light, downed power line, etc.) received from both citizens and employees.
- Facilities Management  
Eleven agents use FootPrints to log and manage building repair and maintenance requests received via phone and email.
- Project Management (Graphics and Printing Departments)  
Five employees use FootPrints as a project management solution to help manage the development of brochures, signs, etc.



“The Engineering Group, in particular, had a Microsoft® Access-based database that it had developed internally, but could no longer retrieve information from it because the person who had developed it no longer worked for the City,” Mr. Fratello said. “Knowing the group could benefit from FootPrints, we purchased additional licenses, and now the department uses FootPrints heavily to track citizen’s requests, primarily related to traffic engineering.”

While Ventura uses most of FootPrints’ features and functionalities, the various departments have customized the product (and their projects) to manage specific processes. In particular, the city uses FootPrints’ escalation feature that employs custom templates and drop-down menus for common service requests, which enables agents to open tickets and address problems much faster. Through the use of FootPrints’ email management feature, agents can automatically trigger email notifications with status and other information throughout the trouble ticket’s life cycle. The city also uses FootPrints’ built-in reporting to drive their inter-departmental billing and charge-back processes.

#### The Results

Since the deployment in early 2003, Ventura has logged approximately 8,683 service requests in FootPrints, including over 4,100 IT-related requests and 4,583 related to facilities maintenance. Mr. Fratello said FootPrints’ popularity has spread rapidly throughout city departments because of its ease-of-use and flexibility. “The multiple project capability makes it extremely easy to automate internal processes and ensure things do not fall through the cracks,” he said. “Because FootPrints can be completely customized, we designed the interface to be very agent-friendly, making them more productive.”

Mr. Fratello added that FootPrints helps cut down on the number of service requests when more than one department is involved with a related project. “For instance, we now use FootPrints for print services. In the past, people would have to submit two separate requests, first to graphics, then to print services. With FootPrints, the system is set-up so that when a ticket goes to graphics, it is automatically routed over to print services.”

Moving forward, Mr. Fratello plans to expand the system’s use by including self-service online tools, such as FAQs and knowledge bases, giving users more capabilities to submit, track, and resolve issues on their own. These capabilities will provide the framework for a more formalized Citizen Response System, which Mr. Fratello and his team are currently architecting. The system will enable citizens to utilize email and the Internet, as well as telephone to interface with the City on pertinent issues, such as public works requests, etc.