



# ACCOMACK COUNTY

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## PROPERTY TAX BILLING SYSTEM MIGRATION PROJECT

APRIL 14, 2009  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
REGULAR MEETING

# Accomack County Property Tax Billing System Migration Project

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# Accomack County Property Tax Billing System Migration Project

## Project Overview

A core group of Accomack County staff from the departments of finance, IT, and assessment along with the Treasurer and Commissioner of Revenue Offices, herein referred to as the “Team”, have identified the need to migrate from the County’s current property tax billing software to a modern, more robust software application.

The County’s current tax billing software was purchased in 1997 and currently runs on the County’s I5 mainframe. It handles the following key functions:

- Real estate tax billing
- Personal property tax billing
- Personal property valuation
- Incorporated town personal property and real estate tax billing
- Public Service Corporation tax billing

We are the only locality in Virginia using this particular application. This obviously places a heavy burden on existing staff to identify and define software modifications brought on by changes in legislation, technology, efficiency etc. There are countless examples of duplicate data entry, flawed interfaces and software bugs within the existing application. It is not cost effective to continue to modify our current software when there are other more reliable and feature rich applications already in Virginia.

The Team wishes to migrate to a windows-based application that is utilized in other Virginia localities. We have identified the Revenue Billing System (RBS) application, developed by PCI, as the most logical choice to migrate too. The sister application of RBS, Revenue Collection System (RCS), is already in place in the Treasurer’s office. RCS handles revenue collections as opposed to revenue billing which RBS handles. RBS and RCS are designed to work together seamlessly which will be a vast improvement over our present situation and the primary reason we believe it is the appropriate application in Accomack. Other reasons include PCI’s familiarity with Accomack and the fact that much of our tax receivable data already resides in RCS meaning less data conversion time and effort.

## Project Purpose & Objectives

### Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to implement the RBS system as the County’s single application for personal property tax valuation, personal property tax billing, public service corporation tax billing and real estate tax billing. The project also includes the creation of two separate interfaces between other County applications. The first interface will be used to export parcel data from the County’s CAMA system to the RBS system for billing purposes. The second interface will be used to export tax receipt transactions directly to the County’s general ledger.

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## **Project Purpose & Objectives-continued**

Although not the primary purpose of this project, the County realizes the importance of its role as a service bureau in producing incorporated town tax bills thus a separate module is included in this project to allow the County to continue in this role.

### **General Objectives:**

- Revenue enhancement-An additional one-time revenue windfall or almost \$2 million will result from the implementation of semi-annual billing.
- Processing efficiency-Much of the processes we use today to value property and record property data are labor intensive. RBS can automate many of these processes leading to a more cost effective property tax program.
- Enhanced service delivery
- Employee morale

### **Specific In-Scope Expectations:**

- Conversion of the annual personal property billing cycle to a semi-annual cycle.
- Creation of an interface between the RBS system and CAMA system eliminating duplicate data entry of parcel data and allowing the Assessor's office to work predominantly in the CAMA system.
- Replacement of the motor vehicle decal fee with a vehicle license fee to appear on the personal property tax bill. Levy of the vehicle license fee will be controlled by district number so that residents of incorporated towns that already charge a license fee or decal fee are not charged.
- Creation of a table-driven land use valuation process.
- Improved personal property proration processing.
- Ability to apply separate tax rates for the four classes of personal property (automobiles including pleasure boats and trailers), mobile homes, machinery & tools and documented boats.
- Assignment of district number to every parcel/item.
- Creation of an automated roll back tax calculation process and billing.
- Elimination of the labor intensive process for valuing pleasure boats, mobile homes, motorcycles and new vehicles.
- Customizable property tax bill which will indicate past due amounts or credit balances.
- Simplified tax supplement and abatement process.
- Improved tracking of accounts with payment plans.
- Improved address correction process.

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## Project Purpose & Objectives-continued

- Creation of new interface from RCS to the County's existing general ledger. Tax, penalty and interest receipts will be allocated based on individual district levies for interface to the general ledger.
- Creation of a new town tax billing application.
- Creation of property books from RBS.
- Improved employee morale.

### Specific Out-of-Scope Expectations:

- State income tax processing
- Business, Professional and Occupational Licensing (BPOL) tax billing (included with RBS application but not part of this project)
- Transient tax billing (Included with RBS application but not part of this project)
- Web-based tax account inquiry

## Project Work Plan

### Work Plan:

*The following is a very high level work plan. PCI has provided the Team with a work plan that consists of 149 tasks to be accomplished. We expect the actual number of tasks to be higher than that.*

**Contract Development** - At this stage we are only operating under a proposal from PCI. If the Board agrees to move forward with the project, we will need to develop a contract that clearly articulates are expectations and deliverables.

**Define Requirements** - An assessment of operational requirements and processes related to this project will be conducted in the Commissioner of Revenue office, Assessor's department and Finance department. Completion of the assessment will guide configuration and customization of the software. This assessment of will be conducted by the Team; however, due to the short amount of time to implement this project, the Team will be assisted by the software provider in this effort.

**Setup and Configure Software** - Setup and initial configuration of both a production server and test server. The test server will be used to handle pre-production loading and testing of software. Results of the testing will guide final the creation of the production database.

# Accomack County Property Tax Billing System Migration Project

## Project Work Plan-continued

**Pre-production testing:** The County will create a test script to guide testing of software. Once all testing is complete, a final production version of the software will be deployed.

**Ordinance Revisions:** Two different County ordinances will need to be amended to support the project objectives. First, the personal property tax ordinance will need to be amended to include provisions for semi-annual billing and to change the due date of the annual tax return of tangible personal property/machinery & tools from May 1 to March 1. This change in due date is needed in order to include the property reported in the County's first installment of personal property due in June. Second, the motor vehicle decal tax ordinance will need to be replaced by an ordinance authorizing the vehicle license fee. This ordinance will need to address such issues as to whether the fee can be refunded, whether it is subject to proration, how it is collected, etc.

**Training:** Training will be done on-site by PCI. PCI will also be on-site at go-live. A more detailed training plan will be developed later.

### Deliverables:

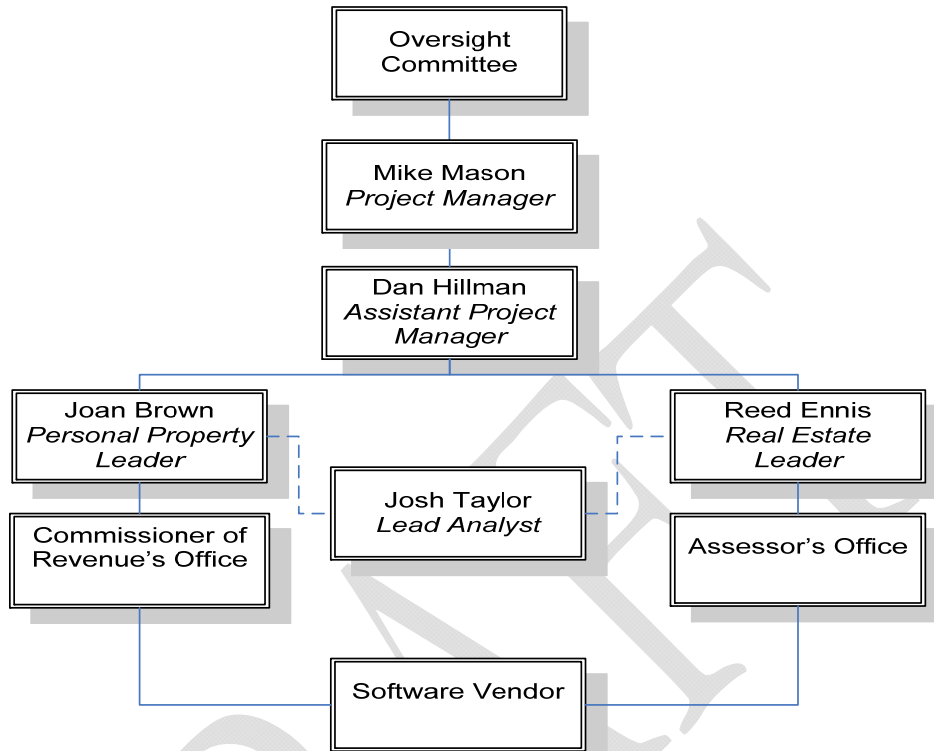
- RBS on the desktops of every employee in the Treasurer's office, Assessor's office, Commissioner's office, Finance department and IT department.
- Fully functioning interface between RBS and the County's CAMA system.
- Full functioning interface between RBS and the County's general ledger.
- On-site training and complete user's manual.

## Project Duration

April 2009-June 2010

# Accomack County Property Tax Billing System Migration Project

## Project Organization



## Project Key Dates

**11/01/09** – Real estate tax bills produced from legacy system (includes Town bills).

**11/02/09** – Annual personal property bills produced from legacy system (includes Town bills).

**12/05/09** – Personal property and real estate taxes due.

**04/15/10** – No lines in Treasurer's office. The vehicle license fee that replaces the motor vehicle decal will be billed on the County's personal property bill due in June.

**05/01/10** – Semi-Annual personal property tax bills generated from RBS (Towns will stay on an annual cycle). Bills will include a prorated vehicle license fee. Semi-Annual real estate tax bills generated from RBS.

**06/05/10** – Semi-annual installment of personal property and real estate bills due along with vehicle license fee.

# Accomack County Property Tax Billing System Migration Project

## Project Risks

Risk	Risk Level	Risk Mitigation
Project not delivered on-time	Medium	The timeframe for implementation is fairly short. Prioritization is key. The majority of resources will be directed towards the personal property valuation and billing component of the project first. Successful implementation of this component is critical to receiving the additional revenues associated with this project in fiscal year 2010.
Project inadequately staffed	Medium	All staff assigned to this project have normal day-to-day responsibilities. In order to devote sufficient time to this project, certain staff will be redirected from their normal duties during set hours during the week. There may also be a need for temporary labor which has been addressed in the project budget.
Too much software customization	Medium	Program customization will be avoided if possible. Some will be needed to address the County's district tax structure which is not a "standard" process in other Virginia localities. The merits of any current process requiring customization will be evaluated before any modifications to the software are pursued. Deviating from off-the-shelf technology has the potential of delaying the project and isolating the County from other Virginia users.
Lack of CAMA package support	Medium	Software support from the provider of the Assessor's CAMA application has been limited. This support may be necessary if the CAMA data export does not function as expected. The Team will attempt to strengthen its business relationship with the CAMA provider early on in the project.
Unable to terminate current maintenance contract	Low	The County is in the first year of a three year maintenance contract with its current provider of tax billing software. We have negotiated an addendum to the contract which allows termination with 90 days notice. The addendum is being reviewed by the County Attorney,
Insufficient server capacity for data	Low	Tax receivable and value data is currently stored on the County's 15. RBS data will be stored on the County's servers. IT recently added more hard drives so the risk of insufficient storage space is low.

# Accomack County Property Tax Billing System Migration Project

## Project Budget

Description	Cost
RBS license fee	\$ 200,000
Town billing module license fee	7,500
NADA valuation services	7,200
Vessels valuation services	789
RBS annual maintenance contract	30,000
Town billing module license fee	1,500
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>\$ 246,989</b>

*Note: PCI travel costs, additional consultation and temporary labor if needed will be absorbed by an existing capital budget set-aside for comprehensive software.*

## Project/System Success Measures:

- Project delivered on-time
- Project delivered within budget
- Semi-annual personal property tax installments implemented
- Fully functioning interface between CAMA system and RBS
- Fully functioning interface between RCS and general ledger
- Reduced annual tax billing software maintenance costs
- Improved ease of navigation between collection and billing systems
- Automated pleasure boat valuation
- Automated motorcycle valuation
- Automated mobile home valuation
- Elimination of duplicate data entry of parcel data