



## News from THE WALLACE GROUP

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**Minn. Governor's Council on  
Developmental Disabilities**

**For Immediate  
Release**

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### **PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES BOOST RECORDKEEPING WITH DOCUMENT IMAGING WORK FOR TWO MINNESOTA CITIES**

**Falcon Heights and Long Prairie make histories digital and searchable with imaging  
technology, saving space and providing ideal work to St. Paul nonprofit**

Paging through maps and blueprints, legal documents and titles, city meeting notes and agendas, crew members with developmental disabilities at Midway Training Services (MTS) in St. Paul prepare municipal documents for document imaging.

While this task of “busywork” is frowned upon by some, the MTS crew has the opposite view, and readily pages through box after box to transfer tens of thousands of pages into the digital age of optical character recognition (OCR). Some of the files for the city of Long Prairie go back to the 1950s, said MTS Operations Manager Paul Klugow, who pulls from a team of about a dozen people with disabilities for the imaging push. In the end, the 27 cardboard bankers boxes numbering 75,000 to 80,000 pages in all are reduced to two DVDs. The days of searching through past city council minutes are now over. Staff research hours are reduced to minutes as electronic word searches pull up every file that’s needed.

## **Document imaging/page two**

“We just wanted a faster way to retrieve the documents, and to store that data in a much smaller area,” said Long Prairie City Administrator and Clerk David Venekamp. With a population of 3,040, Long Prairie has just three office employees. Venekamp, who has been with the city for 30 years, approached the city council to request the imaging project. “Over the years, I’ve been through just about every box of records here,” explains Venekamp, who is nearing retirement. The administrator said it made sense to transfer the records now, rather than wait until a new leader comes in, someone who would be less familiar with them. Space savings have been an added benefit.

Getting those records into the right format with the correct file names is very important. In working with people with disabilities, quality is a key asset, says Klugow. “It’s almost like you’re continually proving yourself,” he said. “There are a lot of quality checks they go into.”

Quality and reliability are two of the strong points noted when people with disabilities tackle document imaging projects, and employer feedback has confirmed this finding. A survey of employers conducted jointly for the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), the Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota State Council on Disability found that in general work situations, people with developmental disabilities performed as well or better than other employees by every standard, other than speed.

## **Document imaging/page three**

For MTS and its document imaging crew, steady attention to detail has been a strong point. Document preparation is key, and is typically the most time consuming aspect for these jobs. Files containing photographs, color documents and larger sizes require extra steps. “That’s the toughest part of the job,” said Klugow. “You don’t know how long it’s going to take, from one box to another there can be a lot of different items.”

For the city of Falcon Heights project, the files contained information on nearly every property in the city. Prior to the imaging effort, the records were not backed up and were more difficult to search, said City Administrator Justin Miller. The files tell much about the city’s 60-year history, along with the locations of water and sewer lines, and when building permits were pulled. City employees can now easily find building permit information and property history.

Information for the city’s 1,300 properties is listed in the system by address. “We can do a lot of queries easier, looking for certain types of permits. It’s easier to search that way instead of going through by hand,” said Miller.

While Klugow can depend upon his dedicated crew members, there’s still the question of software and hardware choices, which are ever changing. “We need to stay on top of the curve regarding new software, services and capabilities, matching software to hardware,” he said.

Speed typically depends upon the amount of preparation work needed and scanner speeds. The city jobs ran 600 to 700 pages an hour, but imaging equipment can allow for speeds up to 4,500 pages per hour.

## **Document imaging/page four**

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, a unit of the Minnesota Department of Administration, works to assure that all people with such disabilities and their families receive the support they need to achieve greater independence and productivity, and to be fully included in the community. The Council began a statewide effort five years ago to promote employment of individuals with developmental disabilities in document imaging throughout the state. For further information, people may visit the Council's Web site, [www.mncdd.org](http://www.mncdd.org).

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