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CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION
ONLINE SYSTEM FOR CUSTOMER APPLICATIONS AND RECORDS
(OSCAR)

INTRODUCTION:

The Commission is nearing completion of a 5-year digital transformation effort. The Online System for Customer Applications and Records (OSCAR) is a suite of technology solutions that have been "going live" from April through August 2019. OSCAR provides the Commission with new automation capabilities that enable it to accept and process applications and jurisdictional inquiries electronically as well as preserve and make available to the public vital historic records that provide insight into the lands managed by the Commission and the history of California.

BACKGROUND:

The Commission maintains over 200 years of records and four million documents through an estimated 160 different record types. Current processes are manual and paper based, resulting in data and documents not being stored electronically in a centralized, searchable location. In Fall 2014, the Commission began the process of working through the State's Technology Project Approval Lifecycle (PAL) process to gain budget approvals and resources to conduct project planning and implementation. A budget appropriation of $225,000 was approved for the 2015-16 Fiscal Year and, in Spring 2016, the Commission contracted with a vendor for business process mapping and analysis, requirements development, and PAL process support. Once into the final stage of the PAL process, a budget augmentation of $2,039,000 was provided in Fiscal Year 2018-19 for the first-year project funding. In September 2018, OSCAR, initially known as the Spatially Indexed Records Management Systems became the twelfth project to complete the PAL process. The Commission contracted with another vendor, pursuant to the PAL process, to complete the project development and implementation. The project progressed on time and on budget. Funding for the additional $1,245,000 to complete the project and $777,000 for ongoing maintenance and operations was subsequently included in the State's 2019-20 budget.

OVERVIEW:

OSCAR utilizes an innovative cloud architecture developed by the Commission's Information Services Division. This architecture utilizes modern cloud services and ties together multiple technologies that integrate document management and archival, business workflow processing, and mapping tools to create a centralized information system around the jurisdictional inquiry and land use application processes. The OSCAR tools are grouped into solution packages based on business process or functionality provided by the tools:

- Solution Group 1 is the business process automation and enterprise document management system.
- Solution Group 2 is the public application and inquiry portal including a payment portal.
- Solution Group 3 is the staff use and public map locator tool and records search engine.

Other benefits realized from OSCAR are improved efficiency through parallel processing of application components, better record keeping for compliance purposes, and the ability for the Commission to reuse the developed technology platforms for future solutions.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The use of highly configurable Software as a Service cloud platforms allowed a rapid initial development cycle from October to first go live for Commission staff on April 1, 2019. After the initial implementation, 2-week release cycles, continued to add additional functionality, while improving the solution with feedback from staff. The final functional requirements were delivered on July 22, 2019, while the team continues to improve the tools as the project transitions to maintenance and operations. Commission staff was heavily involved throughout development and implementation and will be fully trained by the project end date to take ownership of OSCAR.

The Commission secured an Organizational Change Management specialist to facilitate the digital transformation effort. Extensive, ongoing staff training and feedback sessions occurred throughout the release cycles and contributed to a high level of user adoption. Ongoing public outreach is occurring as well, with the Commission's parallel records digitization efforts providing more content to the system over the next several years.

The Commission's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan "calls for leveraging technology to increase public engagement and to be more efficient and responsive in all facets of its work." OSCAR meets Strategy 4 to cultivate operational excellence by integrating technology; and specifically:

- Strategy 4.1 to implement rich technologies and business processes to increase the public's ability to interrelate with Commission programs and policies;
- Strategy 4.2 to extend geographic information systems' content and capabilities to be an integrated decision-making tool for the Commission's management of resources and a valued visualization and communication mechanism for the public; and
- 4.3 to implement an automated electronic data management system for records, historical documents and digitized maps for internal and public use.

With positive feedback from users, OSCAR is poised to usher in a new era of technology driven efficiency and transparency for the Commission.