NHDES LEAN Team

Case Study # 2009-06

LEAN Team: 603-271-3503 www.des.nh.gov

Summary

Organization

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Services

Division

Water

Business Problem

The receipt of Land Resource Management Program applications for wetlands, AoT, shoreland and subsurface programs follow separate log-in, review, tracking and completeness procedures.

Solution

Standard review of permit applications by cross trained administrative staff and return of poorly crafted applications

Key Tools Used

- CSVM/FSVM
- 5S
- Brainstorming

Idea

Innovative Permitting

Team Leader

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Facilitator

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Application Receipt Process

Four permit programs within Land Resources Management; Wetlands, Shoreland, Subsurface, and Alteration of Terrain, had separate administrative staff processes for receipt and review of application packages and data entry into three different databases. Data entry into the accounting system followed markedly different processes and letters to applicants, municipalities and other parties communicated different information and were sometimes redundant. Some programs had lengthy timeframes for the completion of this initial review and data entry and lacked sufficient staff coverage.

The Process & The Bumps

The Administrative staff spent many days describing their then-current processes for the Lean facilitators. When like steps were consolidated, the staff understood that they were doing many of the same tasks, but in different ways.

When the facilitator took the proposed process changes to management, it became clear that the biggest stumbling block would be the inconsistency in statutory and regulatory requirements. Department response time frames were anywhere from one to 14 days. Some programs sent poorly completed applications back to the applicant. Some were regulatorily required to deem them incomplete, and then deny them after a certain time period if no applicant response was forthcoming.

The implementation team spent months pouring over statutes and rules to determine what was consistent among the statutes and rules. The result – very little. Though the items that were required with each application were all different, the process by which they were reviewed, as either present or absent, could be standardized. Where communications between the applicant and property owner could be standardized, they were. Letter templates were created. Checklists were developed listing required materials and applications lacking them were returned to the applicant with a letter clearly identifying the missing items. Communications to the regulated community began in earnest with a Land Resources Management webpage describing proposed changes cross referencing each affected program. Flyers outlining the proposed changes were included with each program's letters and permits. A descriptive email went out to 2500 individual contacts including those that represented multiple constituencies, such as wetland scientists, septic system designers and installers and professional engineers.

> "Now we will have all the information necessary to make an informed decision." – Eileen Chabot
> former Derry Con Com member

The Results

- Applications of all types and their payments are processed the day they are received.
- Up to 40% reduction in processing time for each type of application due to the standardization of data reviewed.
- Elimination of double and triple keying payment information by using database info.
- 45 "tweaks" made to operating procedures to improve consistency in data entry.

The Team

- The ARC Staff