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AccessAbility, Inc. Partnering With Local Communities and Businesses Through Document Imaging Services

MINNEAPOLIS – March 19, 2002 – Local communities and businesses are discovering a valuable partner in Twin Cities non-profit, AccessAbility, Inc., especially when it involves the agency's emerging document imaging services. The City of Shoreview, Minn. was recently able to put a collection of public documents on its website, thanks to AccessAbility's scanning technology and dedicated workforce.

AccessAbility, Inc. is a non-profit rehabilitation agency and production facility, providing work opportunities for adults with employment barriers. The agency's consumers include people with cognitive and physical disabilities, new immigrants and individuals transitioning from welfare to work. AccessAbility ultimately provides qualified workers to employers in the community and quality, labor-intensive services, such as packaging, assembly, mailing, document processing and document destruction.

The City of Shoreview made the move to document imaging two and a half years ago, in order to make a variety of public documents, such as city codes, ordinances, city council agendas and meeting minutes available to residents on the City's website. EDP Computer Systems installed the imaging software, called Laserfische, then suggested that AccessAbility do all of the necessary scanning.

"There were hundreds of pieces of paper that had to be scanned," said Dick Crumb, information services manager for the City of Shoreview. "Documents were piled in boxes, stapled together and stuffed in three ring binders. My staff simply did not have the time to take on such a tedious project."

(more)

According to Crumb, AccessAbility made the potentially daunting task of scanning hundreds of documents hassle-free. "It worked very smoothly," Crumb said. "AccessAbility would pick up a box of papers, scan everything in, then bring the box back and pick up the next batch."

AccessAbility's document imaging process for the City of Shoreview included preparing, scanning and reassembling the documents. Preparation included removing staples and paper clips, taking documents out of binders and tearing apart continuous feed computer paper. Next, the documents were fed into a scanner and saved onto a CD-ROM, able to hold approximately 15,000 pages, the equivalent of a four-drawer file cabinet. AccessAbility can scan up to 4,000 double-sided pages per hour. In the first two months of the project, 174,000 documents were scanned for the City of Shoreview and imported onto the City's computer server. AccessAbility also reassembled all of the documents with original paper fasteners and binders.

Many cities are turning to document imaging as a way to preserve documents, make information available online, save space and reduce administrative costs. Larry Phelps, president of EDP Computer Systems, predicts that nearly every city will post important public documents online in the next 5 to 10 years.

"Municipalities are required to provide public information upon request," Phelps said. "They field requests for information on anything from pet ordinances to what the city council addressed last night and that sends administrative costs through the roof."

The City of Shoreview hopes to work with AccessAbility again in the near future to do large format scanning projects, which involve C-, D- and E-size documents. The ability to scan large building plans and blueprints will be useful to municipalities as well as engineering and architectural firms.

For more information on AccessAbility, Inc., visit www.accessability.org. The City of Shoreview website is at www.shoreviewmn.org.

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