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Polk County proposes to go digital with property records in summer '07

Leah Justice

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Life may get a little easier soon for people who need to get information, such as tax records, for property in Polk County.

Polk County Manager Michael Talbert said recently that the county could have a geographical information system (GIS) on-line as early as the summer of 2007.

Once a GIS for Polk County is in place, instead of having to go to multiple county offices to look up information about a property, residents will be able to stay home and access all that information from one website.

For example, a resident will be able to click on the parcel number for a particular property and see the entire deed through the county website. Talbert said at this point, Polk is one of only two of North Carolina's 100 counties that is not GIS equipped.

At a recent Saluda retreat that focused on officials' visions for the year 2020, Saluda officials said they are ready to have the city's information available on GIS, but they are being held back because the county is not prepared.

Talbert responded that the county expects to have a GIS in place by sometime next summer, well before the next planned property reevaluation in 2009.

According to Talbert, proposals for developing the county's GIS are currently in and the board of commissioners should select a vendor at the end of next month. He said it will then take a year to collect the data, which should be ready to be put on-line by the spring of 2007.

Hopefully it will take only 60 days to get the data on-line, Talbert said, so the county's GIS should be completed sometime after May, 2007.

David Weisgerber of Polk County's information technology department (see story, page 4) will be in charge of digitizing the data and entering it into Polk's computer systems.

Weisgerber says being GIS equipped will help many county departments, especially the tax office.

"GIS really reaches into every department," says Weisgerber. "(GIS is) going to take a load off many departments."

Weisgerber also says when changes occur in the county, GIS will also allow those changes to be made in county records much more quickly.

County officials have said that much county information currently is not up to date and being GIS equipped will help keep information more accurate.

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