

## Automated Accident Reporting System DeKalb County

DeKalb County's Automated Accident Reporting System simplifies and speeds the gathering and sharing of information between county and state agencies about motor vehicle accidents by eliminating manual processes and breaking down barriers to previously siloed databases.

## **About the Situation**

DeKalb County's Transportation Division, the Georgia Office of Highway Safety and other state and local officials rely on accident data from DeKalb County's Central Records Department to perform fatality investigations, develop safety forecasts and provide transportation planning and support. For years, workers in Central Records received paper reports from the DeKalb County Police Department, whose record system was separate from Central Records' system. The paper reports were scanned into Central Records' database, and copies were then mailed to state officials, who in turn had to scan them into their database. With the annual volume exceeding 20,000 reports, the process proved time-consuming and cumbersome. To complicate matters even more, it could be difficult to accurately determine how accidents occurred because of the hand-drawn diagrams on police reports. Inconsistencies in street-naming conventions on police reports made it hard to query data with any level of reliability.

## **Innovative Solution**

To address these issues, county officials decided to implement an instance of the Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS), which is used to report on motor vehicle accidents statewide.

Executive sponsors in the DeKalb County Office of Public Safety formed a steering committee to recommend both operational and technical requirements for implementing GEARS. Public Safety and the Department of Information Technology collaborated on the implementation of operational and technical changes that were based on functional analyses and assessments. They also led work to re-engineer business processes where appropriate to ensure the project's success.

The GEARS application is now installed on all mobile computing terminals in police cars. It includes maps for proper street coding and Easy Street Draw, a software program specifically designed to make diagramming an accident scene quick, easy and accurate. Police officers submit accident reports electronically; the reports can be reviewed by sergeants within minutes and submitted directly to the state's accident information repository. Once reports are submitted, they are immediately available at <u>www.buycrash.com</u> for citizens and insurance companies to purchase. A daily batch job exports all reports to DeKalb County's records management system, and accident reports can be viewed from both the county's system and GEARS.

DeKalb County's Automated Accident Reporting System provides substantial benefits:

- DeKalb County police are now able to clear accident scenes more quickly; public safety is enhanced because officers spend more time on policing duties and less time on accident reports.
- Errors in accident reports have been almost entirely eliminated.
- Online access to accident reports provides the public with enhanced service by eliminating the need to appear in-person at a county facility to obtain copies of reports.
- DeKalb County sells about 98 percent of accident reports online to insurance companies and individuals, which generates more than \$20,000 in revenue each month.
- Central Records has eliminated duplicate work, ensuring the most cost-effective use of taxpayer dollars.