

Sunshine Coast Regional District Finds Bright Solution



Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) is the regional government serving the residents of the Sunshine Coast, a picturesque area located along the southwest coast of mainland British Columbia. SCRD’s 250 employees provide the region’s 28,000 residents with a wide range of diverse services, from recreation to regional water.

The organization has complex and highly specific financial reporting needs, and it meets those needs with one solution – Caseware Working Papers.

95+ Distinct Entities Create Complexity

The complexity of SCRD’s financial reporting requirements becomes obvious when one considers the more than 95 distinct services the organization provides. “It is appropriate to think of each of our different services as a separate company,” explains Tina Perreault, Treasurer for SCRD. “Each has its own set of financials and we need consolidated reporting as well.”

With an annual report running longer than 50 pages, the work required to gather the financial statements data was extensive, and potentially error-prone.

Changing Requirements

SCRD actually began using Caseware Working Papers in the late 1990s, but as changing public sector accounting requirements demanded adjustments to financial reports, the organization began relying more and more on spreadsheets to balance components of the financial statements.

“We knew Caseware was more than capable of handling the new requirements, but we didn’t have the knowledge to make the necessary adjustments,” explains Perreault. “So, instead we used dozens of different methods to balance sections within the financials, from leadsheets to spreadsheets. When a change was required, we had to make adjustments to each component.”

SCRD went in search of a better way.

Review Reaps Rewards

“We met F.H. Black & Company, an Authorized Caseware Consultant, at a GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) conference and spoke to them about our situation,” Perreault recalls. “The firm’s knowledge of governmental

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CHALLENGE

Sunshine Coast Regional District has a decidedly complex financial structure and requires a robust solution that is also easy to use and share across team members.

SOLUTION

A professional review by F.H. Black of its Caseware Working Paper implementation yielded productive recommendations, including the addition of GAAP Financials.

RESULTS

SCRD is saving time, money, and effort. Audit fees are lower, visibility and control have improved, and the organization is leveraging the software for additional reporting tasks.

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Treasurer
Sunshine Coast Regional District

accounting and of Caseware is impressive. I was quickly convinced they were the partners we wanted to help us make better use of Caseware."

F.H. Black performed what it calls a health check of the organization's Caseware implementation, and recommended some changes. One of the recommendations was the use of the GAAP Financial component of Working Papers, and the results have been significant.

"We learned that there are a number of things that we could have been using Caseware for, to help streamline our operations," says Perreault. "The software offers extensive forecasting, budgeting, and statistical analysis capabilities that we can now use to our advantage."

Saving Time, Effort, and Money

"We are saving so much time and effort," says Perreault. "F.H. Black was able to precisely duplicate our financial reporting structure in Caseware GAAP Financials, so we get the results we need with a fraction of the effort."

SCRD's auditing firm uses Caseware as well, and Perreault says that she anticipates that this will result in lower audit fees for the organization: "Our auditors will be able to gather the information they need much more quickly, and it's in the format they are already using. They spend less time, and it will save us money."

Training the staff to use Caseware was a simple task thanks to the software's intuitive nature. "After a introductory class they can navigate and problem-solve easily," notes Perreault. "It is a tremendous benefit to the organization to have multiple people capable of sharing the workload. In the past, we really had only one person who understood the whole system, and that is risky for the organization."

Visibility and Control

Perreault likes the level of control SCRCD maintains by producing its financial statements in-house. "We are working to more fully automate our entire audit process, and Caseware is making that possible," she says. "We have visibility into our statements long before we hand the data off to the auditors. Having this information more quickly helps us be even better at what we do."

Ongoing Return on Investment

Perreault reports that obtaining funding for the software review and implementation of GAAP Financials was a simple matter. "Our Board recognizes the value of investing in technology," she says. "We were able to communicate the benefits and Caseware has delivered on those."

She concludes, "I speak to local governments like ours about Caseware. I'm always astounded when they say they still rely on spreadsheets and pivot tables. Caseware is relatively inexpensive for the value it delivers, and the return on investment is rapid and ongoing. Frankly, I think it would be crazy not to use Caseware."



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