

Saint Lucie County Initiates Cutting-Edge Desktop Appraising Program



iLOOKABOUT



“ Using GeoViewPort (GVP) to bring together all the visual tools, iLOOKABOUT Street imagery, Oblique’s and Ortho photography has **brought the property to the office**. Desktop review is a fantastic means to improve production and get immediate answers for our professionals and the public we serve. ”

Vincent Rahal, Director of Assessments



Project at a Glance

Saint Lucie County contracted with iLOOKABOUT in December 2012 with the purchase of the street level imagery. iLOOKABOUT gathered street-view images and Pictometry created the geo-referenced Orthogonal and Oblique image libraries. iLOOKABOUT’s GeoViewPort Desktop Review application (GVP) became an essential component of the desktop review strategy as the software was necessary to realize the full value of the imagery. The GeoViewPort application allowed all types of imagery to be brought into one window where the user performing the desktop review could manipulate the imagery as needed.

Saint Lucie needed to capture recent photographs of properties and upload them into the CAMA System and then their website. The street level imagery gave users the ability to walk up and down the street taking multiple pictures, capturing various views. “Contracting iLOOKABOUT for Street Level Imagery provided us imagery in a timeframe that we could not do on our own.” Vincent Rahal.

GeoViewPort offered the ability to easily review all the tools available on one viewer. Saint Lucie contracted with iLOOKABOUT to utilize their Management Module in conjunction with the Desktop tools. The Management Module allows the Field Manager to prepare area assignments for Field Appraisers and to track their progress. It is a dynamic tool that will help manage five year inspections, monitor quantitative performance, and manage qualitative reviews.

Saint Lucie decided to do the project in two phases, reviewing half of the County in each phase. The first phase was in the areas where prior inspections tended to be older, the goal was to address those parcels first.



How we Started

A combination of several factors helped to get this project underway, including the economic turnaround, a Property Appraiser who professed the use of technology, and the fact that the state of Florida now allowed counties to utilize Desktop Review for technology purchases. Florida's Department of Revenue introduced Technology Standards for Physical Inspection Subsection 193.023(2) allowing Desktop Review provided three aspects to the technologies that were used; Oblique Imagery, Ortho Imagery and Street Level Imagery. The legislation stated that in making an assessment of the value of real property, the property appraiser would be required to physically inspect the property at least once every five years.

"Where geographically suitable, and at the discretion of the property appraiser, the property appraiser may use image technology in lieu of physical inspection to ensure that the tax roll meets all the requirements of the law."

Regardless of the data collection method used by the property appraiser, the minimum required result was the collection and maintenance of physical data of sufficient quantity and quality for the property appraiser to establish accurate and uniform valuations of all real property as of January 1st of each year, and to meet all other requirements of law. The use of image technology is acceptable for ensuring that the tax roll meets the requirements of law.

Results to Date

Imagery collection was completed in two phases to coincide with the County's inspection schedule. The County was thoroughly satisfied with the StreetScape imagery and the **GeoViewPort** application, due to productivity and quality gains. The ongoing success has led to the County also ordering the Management Module.

In the first two years Saint Lucie County conducted approximately 25,000 inspections utilizing Desktop Review (35% of total inspections). Desktop review has not only saved time, but also saved printing and paper expenses since printed PRCs are no longer necessary. Weather does not affect productivity, and the previously required drive time is now used to virtually inspect more parcels through **GeoViewPort**. Desktop review has enabled Saint Lucie to accomplish goals of increasing their field data collection production, escalate productivity, and exceed state and IAAO standards without increasing the number of Field Appraiser professionals. The process has yielded powerful results and has been simple to implement.

Other GeoViewPort applications;

- 1) Field Inspection – Inspectors check for potential access issues (ie., fences) prior to conducting a Field Visit.
- 2) All Analysts – Review Valuation Area Assignments by visually walking through their Neighbourhoods looking for negative and/or positive influences using Obliques and Street Imagery.
- 3) Appraiser Analysts – Used to review Comparable Sales for presentations at hearings and those submitted by Petitioners.
- 4) Commercial Appraiser Analysts – Aids in quantifying the number of storefronts/bays, occupancy level, tenant names, and contact information from rent/sale signs.

These values, that were at one time not measured or accounted for in Inspection numbers, add tremendous value to the Appraiser's Office.

Recognition

Saint Lucie County received the 2014 Distinguished Assessment Jurisdiction Award. This award is for instituting a technical, procedural or administrative program that is, for the affected jurisdiction, an improvement over prior programs, and is generally recognized as a component of a model assessment system and a contributing factor to equity in property taxation. It is the biggest annual award that IAAO (International Association of Assessing Officers) hands out. *"This award is a testament to the skills and expertise of the professionals who represent the St. Lucie County property appraiser's office. It was a tremendous achievement for the Office and I know the Property Appraiser and our Professionals were excited and proud that we received it."* Vincent Rahal, Director of Assessments.

Contact Us

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