

Aurora Water

Key Benefits

- Automated the utility billing process, saving \$130,000/year
- Accelerated customer service with access to electronic documents
- Shortened the billing cycle to speed up collections
- Achieved ROI in 16 months

API Solutions Integrated

- OptiView® ECM
- OptiSpool®

Aurora Water Improves Utility Billing and Customer Service with an Electronic Document Management Solution from Advanced Processing & Imaging

Aurora Water is the water utility for the city of Aurora, Colorado. It is an enterprise fund utility serving a population of 310,000 with high-quality drinking water, conservation programs, and wastewater and storm water systems.

Challenge: Paper-based billing is a roadblock to fast customer service

Managing the needs of constituents had become a labor-intensive process for Aurora Water. The organization originally outsourced the printing of paper utility bills as well as processing of customer payments. This practice led to exorbitant costs and significant delays in responding to customer inquiries. Aurora Water also lacked a reliable audit trail and was trapped in a long billing cycle as a result of outside vendors' requirements.

At the same time, Aurora Water's customer service representatives were constantly flooded with customer inquiries to which they simply could not adequately respond, due to the lack of access to information about customer bills.

"We continue to find ways to improve processes by utilizing API's products, services and experience."

Dave Smith, Senior Systems Analyst,
Aurora Water

Solution: OptiView ECM and OptiSpool for electronic document management

Advanced Processing & Imaging implemented a solution comprising OptiSpool® and OptiView® ECM products to completely modernize the billing and customer service operations of Aurora Water. "API delivered a final product exactly as promised, a trait that we value and do not see often," commented Dave Smith, senior systems analyst at Aurora Water.

Seamless integration with the utility's SunGard Public Sector billing software enables the API solution to capture spool files from Aurora Water's IBM iSeries system and instantly create a graphical overlay, resulting in a professional-looking utility bill.



These bills are automatically printed in-house and immediately processed to be sent via postal service to customers' homes. An exact duplicate electronic record is automatically linked to each customer's account and made available to customer service representatives when answering inquiries. This electronic record is also maintained for archival purposes.

Aurora Water benefits the most from this new approach during the second half of the billing cycle. As customers return their payment slips with their checks, each is scanned into OptiView ECM. The data is then extracted and automatically entered into the SunGard Public Sector database using OptiView. This eliminates the need for manual data entry and makes it less likely for information from payment slips and checks to be misinterpreted.

Aurora Water is then free to deposit the checks into its accounts, knowing that a copy has been retained and processed by the system—entirely free from data entry errors or time-consuming copying and filing.

The electronic copy of the customer's payment slip and check are also available to Aurora Water's customer service representatives along with the electronic copy of the original bill for a complete record. Plus, all of the transaction's statistical and tracking information is automatically captured in the SunGard Public Sector system for management's reporting needs.

Benefits: Providing faster and more cost-effective service to customers

According to Smith, "Our ability to serve the customer has greatly increased, from being able to reproduce the exact bill to being able to provide the customer with a copy of their check. This has proven invaluable."

Further, Aurora Water's new billing process has delivered measurable savings in money and time. In hard dollar savings alone, Aurora estimates over \$130,000 per year as a direct result of using the API system. There are also significant soft cost reductions achieved through instant information access and fewer errors from data entry.

In addition, the billing cycle has been drastically shortened—allowing Aurora Water to receive payments faster and more efficiently than ever before. The organization achieved return on investment (ROI) after just 16 months of implementation and continues to enjoy an increase in constituent satisfaction.

"We continue to find ways to improve processes by utilizing API's products, services and experience," Smith concluded.

For more information, please visit www.apimg.com or call 800.430.7011.



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Advanced Processing & Imaging, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Advanced Processing & Imaging (API) develops software solutions that enable public and private organizations, across a range of industries, to implement an efficient and effective paperless environment. The API electronic content management (ECM) portfolio includes document management and imaging, records management, workflow and agenda administration. The company is a certified IBM® Business Partner, Microsoft® Gold Partner and Microsoft® ISV. Powerful solutions, the ability to seamlessly integrate with line-of-business applications and world-class customer care set API apart from their competition.

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