

Your Forms. Your Integrated System. Your Way.

The Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office, like other public safety agencies nationwide, has many unique forms and documents used for collecting and tracking agency-specific information. These forms range from tracking personnel issues to prisoner transports to collecting and tracking information for cases.

Scott Martin, who is the captain overseeing investigations at the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office, said, "Our sheriff has certain criteria that he requires and the next sheriff might want something different" in terms of information-gathering and reporting for the department, which sits at the base of the Great Smoky Mountains northeast of Atlanta.

Case Study: Custom Forms

When the agency needed a new Records Management System (RMS) in 2012, Martin said the Zuercher Technologies' Zuercher Suite solution stood out from the competition because it met the department's current needs and could easily adapt for future needs.

"Zuercher Technologies was the only one that we found that had everything built in," he said.

The advent of mobile computing in the late 1990s and early 2000s led many law enforcement software vendors to create standard forms for officers to complete in the field and file electronically, and departments immediately realized the benefits of paperless reporting. Typical forms included incident reports, field interviews, crash and accident reports, as well as citations.

However, these standard electronic forms usually cover only 25 to 30 percent of the forms used by individual agencies. If an agency wants its other forms automated into its existing software system, typical vendors charge fees per form and often require a third-party system to be "bolted" on to its RMS.

A Built-in Solution

To meet every department's unique needs and to far outpace its competitors, Zuercher Technologies developed a custom form generator, which the company provides at no additional cost as a standard part of its Zuercher Suite software solution.

Martin said, "I have not found any other system that has the custom forms or custom modules that you can build to the liking of your agency."

The tool allows agencies to create their custom forms within Zuercher Suite and attach them to specific records within the system. This keeps everything in a central, easily accessible location and puts the customer in control.



SUMMARY

AGENCY

Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office

AREA SERVED

285 square miles

POPULATION

30,031

PRODUCTS

CAD, Mapping, Mobile, Reporting, Records, Jail, Civil, and Administration.

“I’m not an IT person. I’m a cop. I know how I want it to work when I’m out there fighting the bad guys,” Martin said.

Additional Benefits

The agency discovered a number of other benefits and efficiencies in using the custom form tool:

- **Ease of use.** “It’s very easy to build a form in this system. It has streamlined our operations tremendously,” explained Martin, who has incorporated such documents as the department’s case forms, inmate forms, performance evaluations and secondary employment request forms.
- **Cost savings.** Department-specific forms no longer have to be printed and housed in a filing cabinet, easing the burden of paper costs.
- **Searchable.** Forms are attached to related records, such as people, property and cases, which makes the information easier to locate and use as an investigative and reporting tool.
- **Consistency.** Fields in custom forms provide a way to collect required information by allowing each department to define which blanks must be filled in by users. Martin calls it the “Cop-proof” feature.
- **RMS tool.** Name, address and vehicle fields are connected to each agency’s master indices to reduce redundant data entry.
- **Information sharing.** Martin used this example: “We don’t have to forward a paper copy of the case file to our DA’s office because they have access through Zuercher Suite. They pull any forms that they need to prosecute a case. The DA can see everything.”
- **Electronic signature fields.** The integrated Zuercher Suite signature pad solution captures and stores signatures, eliminating the need to scan a signed form.
- **Custom drop-down menus.** Frequently used information can be integrated into drop-down menus that save officers time.
- **Help Center.** Agencies can go to Zuercher Technologies’ Help Center within the software to find a library of custom forms that have been created by all agencies, including many created by Lumpkin County’s Captain Martin. Public safety personnel can download a form template or customize it for their agency.
- **Customer service.** Martin said, “I’ve had great success working with Zuercher Technologies. I have never seen a bunch of people so willing to help. They are constantly working to improve their product.”
- **Reports.** Data included in custom forms also can be used to create reports with the Reporting custom report generator to show crime trends, sex offender registries and incident statistics. “This just blows everybody out of the water that I have seen,” Martin said.

Rationale

No other vendor in the industry gives the customer so much control at no extra cost.

The Lumpkin County Sheriff’s Office, which went live with Zuercher Suite in December 2012, immediately reaped the benefits of the custom form generator.

“When we first went on this system, I got on forms hot and heavy,” Martin said. And department personnel “see where life has been made easier.”

The freedom of customization inherent in the custom form generator amplifies the capabilities of the Zuercher Suite solution, creating a powerful tool for agencies to solve their unique data entry challenges.