

# Cityworks and TruePoint Utility Billing Integrate to Streamline Processes

at Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission, SC

By Glenn Mathes, Business Development Manager, TruePoint Solutions



**E**arly in 2015, the Laurens County Water and Sewer Commission, a long-time Cityworks customer, selected TruePoint Solutions' TrueBill product as its new CIS/Utility Billing solution to manage their water and sewer customer billing needs. A major part of that decision was TruePoint's long-standing relationship as a Cityworks partner, as well as their unique ability to natively integrate with Cityworks without the need for custom third-party middleware.

“The result has been an overwhelming success in terms of cost reduction, increased efficiency, and improved customer satisfaction.”

Angie Nelson, Director of Administration and Customer Service

## A More Efficient Operation

The integration of Cityworks and TrueBill significantly improved efficiency in customer move in/move out, overall billing time, meter reading, and shutoffs. The customer move in/move out process has gone from 20–25 minutes down to 4–5 minutes. This represents a 400% increase in performance, or an overall time savings of 80%. Now, the system automatically creates a work order in Cityworks, logs notes, disconnects service, creates a new account, and connects the new account. The overall billing time (which includes taking meter readings, checking bills, entering final bills, and sending them to the printer) is down from 8–10 hours to 1.5–2 hours.

The improvements to the meter-reading process include automatic creation of work orders in Cityworks for meters that did not read, which saved an hour of work time compared to the old system. Additionally, completing work orders in Cityworks and the subsequent entry into TrueBill saves two hours of processing time. The detailed customer usage comparison reports and trend analysis tools lowered costs and improved customer service and satisfaction across the board. CIS customer information is also now available to system users directly from their Esri map, which is invaluable.

## Flexible Deployment Options

Another attractive element to the combination of TrueBill and Cityworks was the flexible deployment options available. Both applications are available as a local implementation or in the cloud. In this case, Cityworks is installed locally at the District, while the TruePoint Solutions TrueBill CIS/Utility Billing application is hosted on an Amazon cloud server.

## Complementary Technology

Cityworks and TrueBill are complementary applications. Because TrueBill is a native browser-based application, the architecture lends itself to taking full advantage of web services technology. Through the use of web services and APIs, links to TrueBill can be embedded within the Cityworks application (and vice versa) to launch CIS system processes from within Cityworks without the need to log in to the CIS system separately. Security is controlled and managed via Microsoft Active Directory. This means no third-party custom middleware, no staging tables, no synchronization, and no compromises in supportability or performance.

There has been much discussion recently on the use of APIs in reshaping government technology (see “Reshaping Cities—Using APIs to Build Smarter Cities” on the Cityworks website <http://www.cityworks.com/2015/11/reshaping-cities/>).

This approach also supports the growing trend toward “best in class” applications as well as Gartner’s “postmodern ERP” approach. As opposed to the older, monolithic, single-vendor ERP approach of the past, where accepting substandard modular applications as part of the whole was common, smart agencies are recognizing that they can select the best application available for the job, but also have functional, supportable, and reliable integrations without the functional compromise that a single-vendor ERP solution represents.

## Bottom Line

In terms of gains in efficiency and improved customer service, since going live in November 2015, “we’ve just begun to scratch the surface!” Nelson said. 📍