Using Forecasting, Kaukauna Area Schools Discover How to Utilize an Energy Efficiency Exemption to Support Mill Rate Management

THE SITUATION

With a tradition of academic excellence, Kaukauna School District also strives to maintain a tradition of financial excellence. As debt services are scheduled to end during fiscal year 2017-18, KASD knew they were entering a situation where the levy rate would drop from $9.13 to $7.50 per $1,000 of property value. Rather than face levy rate fluctuations, the district sought ways to operate with a constant levy rate. Robert Schafer, Business Manager for KASD for the past 11 years, was determined to revisit the District's operational strategy and resources available to effectively forecast and manage the levy rate in future years.

ORGANIZATION TYPE
K-12 Public School

ENROLLMENT
3,914

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET
$50M

The Kaukauna Area School District (KASD) is a vibrant K-12 public school district with seven schools, hundreds of dedicated teachers and staff, and a history of more than 120 years of providing quality instruction. Wisconsin School Report Cards (2015-2016) show five KASD schools "Exceeding Expectations," one earning the "Significantly Exceeds Expectations" distinction. That's one of the highest rankings that the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provides in its annual review of state schools.

THE SOLUTION

Historically, Kaukauna has utilized an internal system to build and forecast budgets. However, after learning about the Forecast5 product suite at various state conferences and presentations, the district was impressed with the wealth of information available from the data within the tools. Subscribing to 5Cast and 5Sight became the solution that the District needed to support their evolving strategies and needs.

Using the platforms for two years, Schafer has elevated the District to new findings and solutions, as the product continues to evolve and offer new features and functionalities. Specifically, he notes that the ability to change a small piece of data and see the long-range effects it would have on the District is a great benefit. Schafer shares that "KASD has become reliant on Forecast5 for various areas of operations; long range commitments for capital projects, levy rate forecasts, and surplus/deficit models."

THE RESULTS

With the ability to input initial data and adjust the figures given different scenarios, Schafer developed a plan that allowed KASD to create a relatively flat tax levy rate while completing upwards of $25 million dollars in energy efficiency projects.

By building and executing a forecast within 5Cast, the District gained the insight and had the ability to communicate the impact of all factors related to the levy rate, debt service and revenue limit. The output allowed Kaukauna to move forward with $50 million dollars invested in long term maintenance projects due to the execution of forecasting.

KASD continues to leverage data analytics to gain the insights needed to make confident and efficient decisions. Not only are they setting a new standard in district innovation, but they are joining the Forecast5 team and organizations across the country in creating and maintaining a tradition of excellence.