



CUSTOMER

The Port of Houston Authority of Harris County, Texas

HEADQUARTERS

Houston, Texas

Number of Locations

Three

Number of Employees

600

The Port of Houston Streamlines CAFR Reporting With CaseWare

The Port of Houston Authority (The Port) lies along the 52-mile-long Houston Ship Channel. It is the busiest port in the United States in terms of foreign tonnage, and houses the world's second largest petrochemical complex. The Port is an economic engine that produces jobs and economic prosperity for the local and state economy. The Port employs nearly 600 people and is responsible for an operating budget of over \$200 million. Financial stewardship and efficiency are vital components of The Port's mission. Helping it to achieve its mission is CaseWare Government Reporting.

A Time-Consuming Process

For years, The Port produced its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) in a painstaking fashion, accumulating spreadsheets and text documents and incorporating the input of many individuals. This manual approach presented a number of difficulties. "With so many of us accessing and inputting the information, it was often nearly impossible to know which version was the latest, where on the server it was stored, or what the file was named," explains Maxine Buckles, Corporate Controller for The Port. "Plus, all the supporting documents were not available to us in one place. The whole process was very time consuming and at



times frustrating for all involved."

Another obstacle to the final production of the CAFR were post-audit adjustments. "We would make a change to our spreadsheet and then had to ensure that all the interrelated schedules and footnotes were updated as well. It was an onerous process. Simple adjustments could take many hours to complete and verify."

A Clear Choice

The Port began researching a software solution to help it efficiently produce accurate financial statements. Three products were reviewed, and CaseWare was selected. "The choice was clear," Buckles says. "One package was excessively expensive, and the other package was too basic and lacked vital functionality we needed. CaseWare offers exactly what we need at a fair price."

CHALLENGE

The Port of Houston used a largely manual process to produce its CAFR. It was time-consuming, error-prone, inefficient, and did not support collaboration among the staff.

SOLUTION

After reviewing available solutions, The Port selected CaseWare Government Reporting as its enterprise CAFR reporting solution.

RESULTS

With a single reporting cycle successfully complete, The Port can already appreciate the time savings, labor savings, and increased efficiency and collaboration CaseWare brings.

"CaseWare takes away many of the clerical and administrative chores involved in producing our CAFR, which leaves us all more time to focus on the accuracy, completeness, and impact of the numbers."

Maxine Buckles
Corporate Controller

About CaseWare International Inc.

Accountants and auditors in practices large and small, in corporations, and government recognize CaseWare International as the premier creator of assurance, reporting and analysis tools. In over 130 countries, the CaseWare family of products helps accounting professionals perform their work more easily and efficiently.

Professional Partner is Key

CaseWare referred The Port to Certified Trainers and Consultants for CaseWare solutions—Gray & Associates, CPAs. "They made all the difference," says Buckles. "We could not have done this without them. Not only do they have significant and relevant financial and operational knowledge, but they are product experts with a professional approach to project management."

The Port has high praise for the implementation and continuing support from Gray & Associates. "They have perfected their methodology," says Buckles. "Ours is a large and complex installation, yet Gray & Associates handled it efficiently and cost effectively. They were here beside us until our CAFR was complete and published."

Generous Time Savings

The Port has been through just one reporting cycle with CaseWare, but already staff can appreciate the enormous time and effort savings the organization will realize in second and subsequent years. "We ran parallel processes this first year," explains Buckles. "Next year we expect that CaseWare will shave substantial time, and immeasurable aggravation from the cycle."

Increased Accuracy

In addition to the time savings, Buckles reports that her office and the Port Commission have greater confidence in the end product. "With spreadsheets there is ample opportunity for formula or recalculation errors to slip in," says Buckles. "CaseWare validates, verifies, and double checks the data automatically for us."

On the heels of such success producing its

CAFR with CaseWare, The Port is considering using CaseWare to generate quarterly financial statements as well. "While they are not required, CaseWare makes the statements so easy to produce, we plan to use them to deliver timely data to management and to our Commission," says Buckles.

Greater Collaboration

CaseWare helps to promote greater collaboration among the financial teams at The Port. "We have one single repository for our reporting data. We can all work on our areas within CaseWare and the results funnel to the right place," says Buckles. "Everyone can see the results right away. Paper documents can be scanned and associated with the file as needed and that makes finding the information we need much easier."

Uniformity in the look and feel of The Port's reports is an added benefit. "Even something as simple as the consistent use of a single font style throughout the documents was a challenge before," says Buckles. "Now it's easier to create a uniform, professional appearance."

A Successful Project

The Port of Houston is well pleased with its new financial reporting solution and with its partnership with Gray & Associates. "CaseWare takes away many of the clerical and administrative chores involved in producing our CAFR, which leaves us all more time to focus on the accuracy, completeness, and impact of the numbers," concludes Buckles. "And our partnership with Gray & Associates was a smart decision. Their service was a major factor in the success of this project."

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