



IN-PLANT PRINTING AND MAILING ASSOCIATION

# INSIDEDGE

A Newsletter for In-House Printing and Mailing Professionals

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## Southwest Florida Water Management District Leaps into Wide-Format Business



“You have to be ready for change,” emphasizes Earl Rich, Document Services Manager for the Southwest Florida Water Management District, headquartered in Brooksville, FL. “Listen to your customers. Find out what they need today and what they will need tomorrow.”

That’s exactly what Rich has done, jumping into the wide format copy business about a year ago with the purchase of a new Canon iPF8100. The District creates and works with a large number of maps that often need to be reproduced very quickly. Demand continued to grow. “It was difficult to find a vendor that could meet our delivery requirements,” Rich says. The high cost of outsourcing wide format work was a driving factor in their decision to pull some of those projects back in-house.

One of the most interesting wide-format projects has been the reproduction of a series of backlit transparencies, promoting various water saving tips. These banners were displayed at the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport during the 2009 Super Bowl.

Soon they will be adding a large-format, 48 inch laminator to complement their wide-format



printer. “This was a money saving investment with an ROI of only 4 months,” Rich says. “When we sat down and looked at what we had spent last fiscal year on wide-format laminating, compared with the price of the equipment, supplies and labor, the decision to buy our own equipment was obviously the right thing to do.”

So far, this print/mail team with its 6 full-time and two part-time staff members, has been very successful at anticipating business trends related to the services provided to the District. “It is important to accurately forecast the products and services our internal customers will need to

do their jobs in the coming months or years. An honest evaluation of an in-plant’s strengths, budgetary constraints, return on investment and real organizational benefits are important first steps in determining where to direct resources.”

Like many others, they are being challenged to do more with less. Cross training, multi-tasking and creative work sharing are taking center stage. “Our first priority is to support the District’s mission within our particular area of expertise.” That’s why almost all print and copy projects pass through Printing Services. “With a per person staff average of 23 years experience in the industry, it is our responsibility to leverage that experience to enable us to expand our limited resources wisely.”

Where cost effective, they are encouraging a short-run, on demand mentality among their customers. This enables more projects to stay in-house at a lower cost. With last year’s addition of a Canon Image Press 7000, print on demand has become a more viable option for customers.

While equipped with five production copiers, they rely most heavily on the Canon 110 and Canon Image Press

7000. Color is gaining attention, but black/white is still the backbone of the shop.



Great emphasis has been placed on implementing green business practices statewide.

Contributing to the movement, they have changed paper stock to meet FSC standards. If jobs require outsourcing, the printing specs require FSC stocks, soy ink, as well as other green standards. Focusing on the state’s green initiative, demand continues to climb for digital products such as CD and DVD duplication. “We remind customers to print only what is needed, when it is needed,” Rich explains. “Smaller orders save paper, storage space and money.” They

have created a small, but well directed awareness campaign to highlight some of the painless ways customers can save money or reduce their carbon footprint through simple design tips to save postage or finding the right recycled paper.

The Mail Center, headquartered in Brooksville, FL, which processes 20-30,000 incoming pieces of mail per month for a 16 county area along the Gulf Coast of Florida, has undergone similar streamlining efforts. One of the modifications to the workflow process has been installing a bar code scanner to help track overnight deliveries.

Mail Services coordinates the daily pick-up and delivery of all mail and time-sensitive



Pictured David Valle

documents between the district's headquarters in Brooksville and service offices in Tampa, Sarasota and Bartow. They travel approximately 400 miles round-trip daily. "Many of the documents transferred between the offices are time-sensitive as mandated by Florida statute," explains Rich. Since the large overnight couriers do not provide overnight services to some of the remote areas they service, the in-plant's delivery services have proven absolutely essential.

The Print Shop and Mailroom recently joined the Document Services section which includes Records Management, Document Imaging and the Technical Library. While the departmental grouping may not be typical, the merger has worked out very well for their organization. "Since joining Document Services, we have expanded our offerings to include the digitization of VHS tapes, audio cassette tapes and color slides."

To view their website, visit: [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)

