



# Texas Department of State Health Services

## Vital Statics Unit

### **Vital Records Imaging Project**

*Preserving History For Texas Families*



# Agency Overview

- The Texas Department of State Health Services – Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) manages the registration of all vital events in the State of Texas.
- VSU is also the home to more than **48 million** records that are the basic documents needed to establish identity, citizenship, family relationships, and inheritance.
- VSU responds to customer requests for certified copies or verification of vital event records, and other supplemental documents.
- VSU monitors the validity and reliability of vital statistics data reported to ensure quality that enable federal, state and local governmental entities to make pertinent public health decisions.
- VSU responds to requests for information from the public and government agencies.

# Agency Overview

## Request Processing Branch

- The Request Processing Branch of VSU is responsible for issuing certified copies of birth certificates, death certificates, marriage and divorce verifications, and filing supplemental records (adoptions, paternities, and amendments) to existing birth and death certificates.
- The Request Processing Branch consists of three groups: *Record Issuance, Supplemental Registration and Support Operation.*
- Request Processing currently has six specialty teams: *Customer Service, Issuance, Texas.gov, Amendments, Adoptions, and Paternities.* In addition to the six specialty teams, Request Processing also has *Telecommunications, the Allocation/Central Print Room, Quality Assurance, and the Management Team.*

## Imaging Team

Additionally, VSU recently created an Imaging Team for the purpose of maintaining updates and to provide consistency between the 48 Million Vital Records filed in the State of Texas and their electronic images while ensuring access to accurate data and high quality digital images.

# Agency Overview

## VSU Has Three Main Areas of Focus:

### Secure, Store, and File Vital Records

- The Texas Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) is a specialized division of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
- File supplementals and amendments

### Search and Retrieve Vital Records

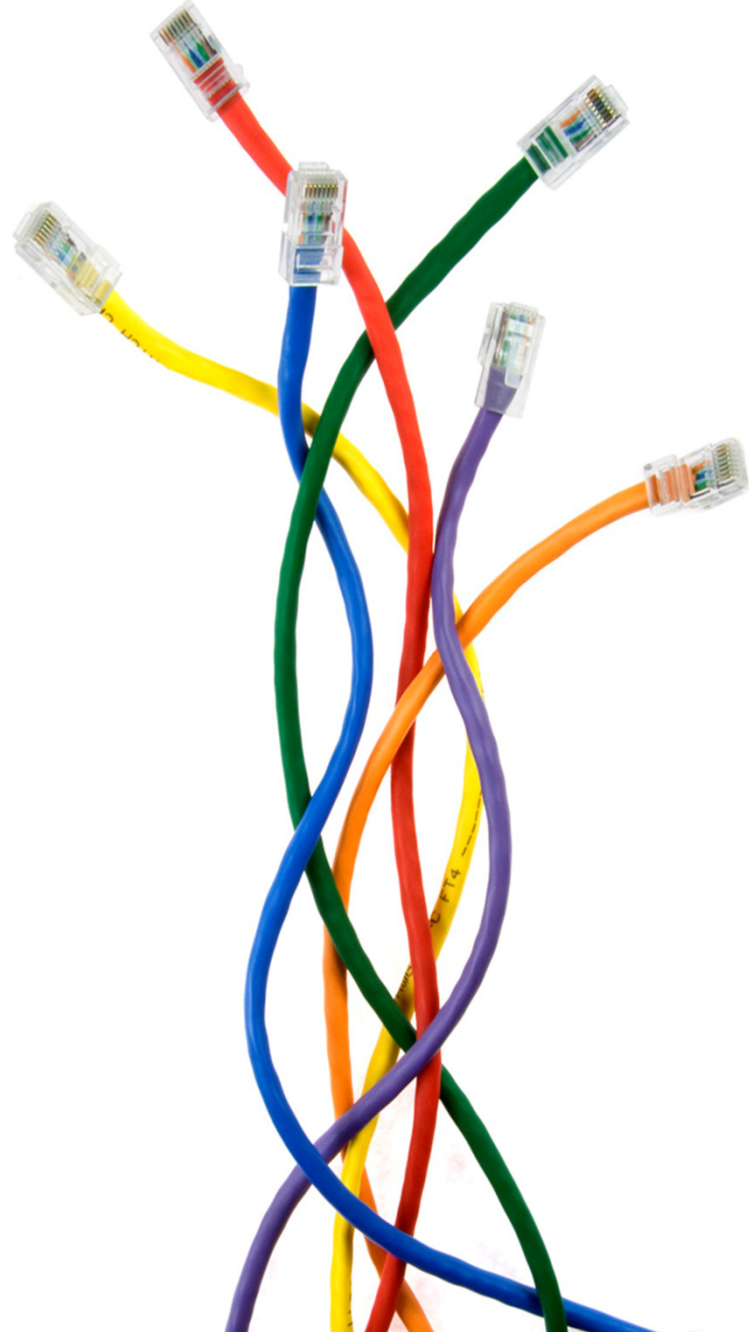
- Almost 750,000 documents are registered each year; ~2,055 a day
- More than 330,000 searches for documents are requested each year; ~904 a day

### Other Responsibilities

- Provide State LBB Federal Government with statistics

The number of orders has increased an average of 12.5% year after year for the last six years.

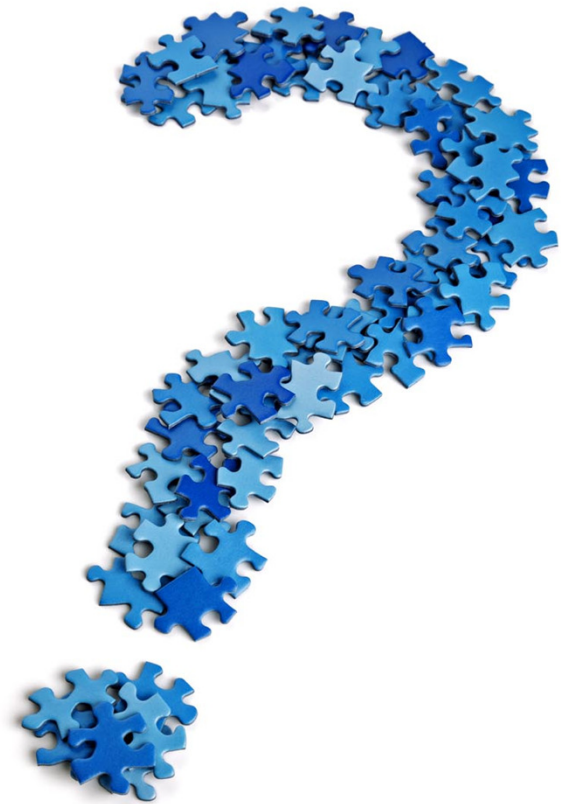
**Issue**



## Agency Issue

DSHS, Vital Statistics Unit houses nearly 48 million vital records dating back to the 19th century. Prior to the implementation of the Vital Records Imaging Project, these records were available only in paper form.

**The department's expanding workload made handling and maintaining these paper records a growing challenge for Vital Statistics Unit staff.**



# Issues Prior to VRIP

## VSU Staff Spending Inordinate Amount of Time on Manual Process

- 31 agency staff members – supported by 35 contract temps
- Review request > look up record > pull book > pull record > copy record > reassemble book > return book

## VSU Requests:

### Lobby

- Average of approximately 150 requests were processed each day with each request taking 5-6 hours.

### Online Order

- Average of approximately 530 requests were processed each day taking up to 10-15 days to complete.

### Mail In Orders

- Average of approximately 400 requests were processed each day taking up to 4 -6 weeks for each request.

# Impact of Issues

## Issue Summary

- Long wait times due to a manual process had a negative impact on citizens.
- VSU staff had to put other agency responsibilities on hold to process citizen and government requests
- Most walk-in requests would not be ready for pick up until the next business day
- This meant another day of travel and inconvenience

**VSU recognized that an electronic process would be able to handle requests in an easier, more efficient time frame.**

# VRIP — Objective & Approach



# Objectives of VRIP

## Maintain Document Integrity and Security

- Minimize damage to fragile, one-of-a-kind records
- Mitigate security risks and reduce potential for fraud

## Redesign Business Processes

- Expedite processing of mail-in, online orders and provide walk-in customers faster same day service
- Continue to integrate print capture of electronically filed records

## Make Texas Birth and Death Images Available Electronically for Issuance by VSU Staff

- Image, Index, Ingest, and QA over 34 million records
- Implement tools to facilitate document search, retrieval, and printing
- Developed and deployed tools that allow document images to be annotated and marked as fraudulent

## Improve Operations

- Reduce Cost and Increase Revenue
- Repurpose resources and eliminate contract temps

# Approach

## Steps Taken To Meet Objectives:

1. Developed Plan With Internal Team
2. Identified Work Area and Resources
3. Brought In Imaging Equipment and Supplemental Resources
4. Restarted Full Production Imaging in *December 2008*
5. Continually Evaluated and Improved Process
6. Finished Project on February 29, 2012 with **28.2** Million Records in Production

# Results



# Results of VRIP

## Maintained Document Integrity and Security

- Fragile, one-of-a-kind records are no longer handled manually
- Electronic format removes the risk of paper record deterioration and lost or damaged records due to natural disaster
- Security risks and fraud can now be monitored electronically
- Automated process reduces risk for errors made in manual process

## Redesign Business Processes

- Expedited process for mail-in and online orders
- Walk-in customers are now provided faster, same day service
- Electronically filed records are continuously integrated by print capture into the System

# Results

## Made Texas Birth and Death Images Available Electronically for Issuance by VSU Staff

- Imaged, Indexed, Ingested, and Verified **over 34 million** records
- Implemented tools to facilitate document searching, retrieval, and printing
- Developed and deployed tools that allow document images to be annotated and marked as fraudulent

## Improved Operations

- Reduced Cost and Increased Revenue
- Repurposed resources and eliminated contract temps
  - A 100% reduction in contract temps
- Time saved creates work capacity for other projects and operations
  - *For Example:* The LBB Budget Data Current Days to Completion is 10.79 days.

# Results

## Direct VSU Benefit

### Decrease In Time To Process Requests

#### Lobby

- Most requests are processed in less than **10 minutes**

#### Online Order

- Days to Completion at **12 days**

#### Mail In Order

- Days to Completion at **27 days**

An additional 7 Million records have been imaged and are currently stored in the document repository. VSU is working towards electronic access of these records by adding in additional elements needed for the long indexing electronic search function.

## Closing

There are now 145 years and more than 28.2 million records available for State use. This has enabled VSU to process orders more efficiently because records are available electronically as opposed to having to request the paper records from their secured storage location. The document retrieval system has enabled VSU staff to access and fulfill more orders in a decreased amount of time.

**The Vital Records Imaging Project leaves a legacy of preservation of the irreplaceable. The Citizens of Texas may count on the DSHS to safeguard their records.**

# Questions and Answers

