



NEBRASKA VICTORY

*"In almost 38 years of public service and community service,
I have never been involved in a project that was this successful."*

– John Ewing, Douglas County Treasurer

On February 1, 2013, Rhonda Lahm was appointed as the new Director of the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). “When it was announced that I was going to become the director, the former director said, ‘There’s a meeting you should come to, because this is something we really need to do,’” explained Rhonda. During the meeting, Betty Johnson, Administrator of Vehicle Services, and several of her counterparts in Nebraska’s County Treasurer offices shared their long-term dream—modernizing the DMV’s vehicle registration software. Their current system was holding them back. “It had aged out. While it functioned, it didn’t have the capabilities to do what we wanted to,” said Julie Maaske, Deputy Director of the Nebraska DMV. “It was limiting our ability to expand customer service,” Betty added. Rhonda heard the call to action and took their concerns to the budget office. “Clearly, we have a need here—where do we start?” Rhonda asked. This question took the DMV on a multi-year journey, culminating in the launch of a new system, VicToRy, in October 2019.



Left to Right - Row 1: Betty Johnson, Sarah Doyle, Tara Nelson, Christina Watkins, Emylee Houfek, Katie Holliday, Amanda Cavel; Row 2: Eric Van Asperen, Tim Amos, Michael Bremiller, Ian Skyles, John Brophy; Row 3: Evan Smith, Michael Brestel, Ross Melby, Matt Zeltwanger, Jonathan Emeigh; Row 4: Taylor Fegenbush, Eric Bowdish, Ryan Leas, Jeff Schafer, Keith Dey, Jarrett Brenner, Myndert Papenhuyzen

Following a Dream

For Rhonda and the County Treasurers to achieve their dream of modernizing the DMV's software, the budget department advised them to first develop a business plan. The agency created a plan with the help of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. Based on the plan, they decided to seek out a commercial off-the-shelf, or COTS, system.

There was still a long road ahead before starting the modernization project, and the Nebraska DMV wanted to make sure they were prepared. "We really did our homework on what we wanted the system to do before we thought about a vendor," said Julie Maaske, Deputy Director of the Nebraska DMV and the project's sponsor. Getting input from the project's many stakeholders was a critical part of the process. In Nebraska, vehicle registration, while overseen by the DMV, is handled by the County Treasurers. Though both groups would be using the new software, the DMV was responsible for procurement and the resulting project. "It was a DMV project, but we made it into a DMV/County Treasurer project," said Betty Johnson, Administrator of Vehicle Services.

"We had a very purposeful plan—we didn't rush, but we didn't drag our feet. – Rhonda Lahm, DMV Director"



Rhonda Lahm

The DMV also brought in other important stakeholders, including the Nebraska Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, "so that when we got the new system, it would be based on what they wanted," Julie explained. Involving stakeholders early in the procurement process had several foundational benefits for the project. "We gathered an immense amount of information," said Julie, which informed decisions throughout the duration of the project. "It also helped build relationships that worked very well throughout the process," Julie continued.

These relationships would prove to be incredibly valuable as the Nebraska DMV worked with County Treasurers, other stakeholders, and Fast Enterprises (FAST) to implement their new software, VicToRy, in a project that ran from March 26, 2018 to October 15, 2019.

A DMV/County Treasurer Project

As the project progressed, the Nebraska DMV and the County Treasurers worked together to ensure the resulting software met everyone's needs. "This project was for the state so that we could collect the correct data more efficiently, but the impact on the counties is significantly greater," explained Tim Amos, DMV Developer. The VicToRy program needed to meet the varied needs of the state's 93 counties in addition to those of the DMV. Ample communication between the stakeholders made this possible.

Early in the project, both state and county employees were invited to share their insights. "We had better participation for those meetings than we ever expected," said John Brophy, DMV Tech Team Member. These meetings enabled county users to express their opinions alongside those of the state-side users and project staff. "Before they finalized anything, the counties could say how the change would affect them," explained Tracy Hitchler, Expert User. Everyone's contributions were incorporated into the final

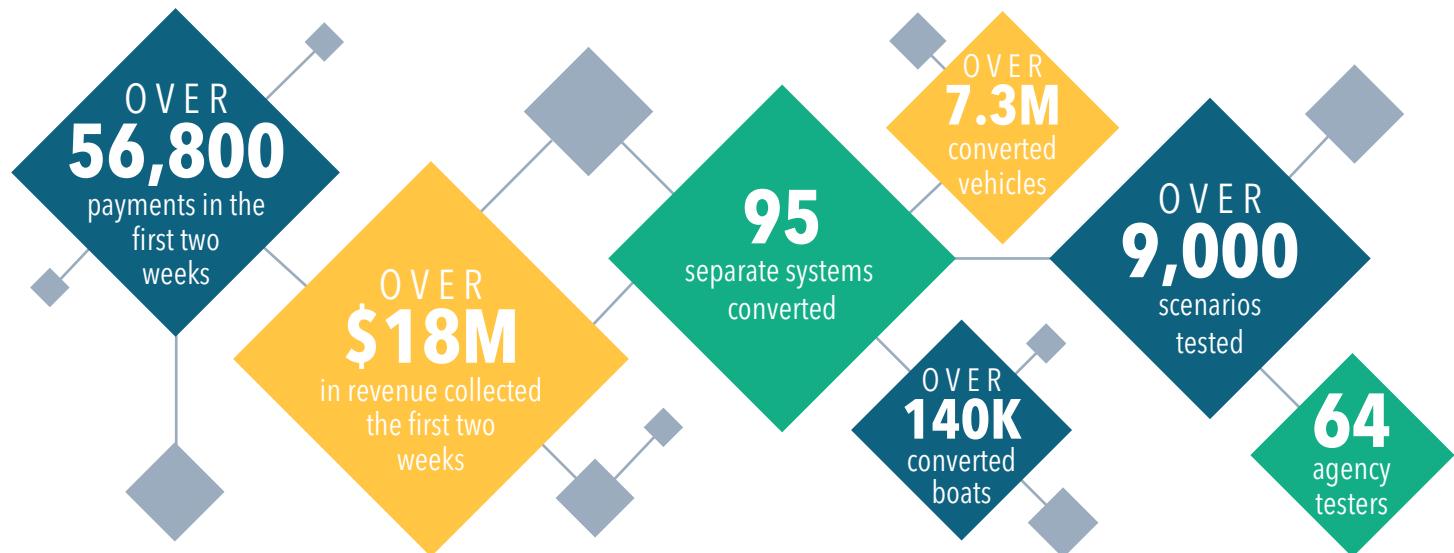
VicToRy program. "The hours that we spent in definition meetings were key. They really listened to what we wanted," said Emylee Houfek, Subject Matter Expert (SME).

Project staff also visited county offices and participated in various out-of-office meetings, workshops, and conferences, including those held by the Nebraska Association of County Treasurers. These visits enabled state and FAST staff to see firsthand how each county processed vehicle registrations. "I take great pride that I know not only the help desk [state] side, but also the county side," Emylee said. County users also got a sneak peek of VicToRy and, in some cases, took it for a test drive. These outreach efforts helped spread news of the VicToRy project and encouraged county staff to get involved. Later in the project, both state and county users were asked to help with testing and system verification. SME Jonathan Emeigh said, "We had a lot of people from the counties involved. That was really key."

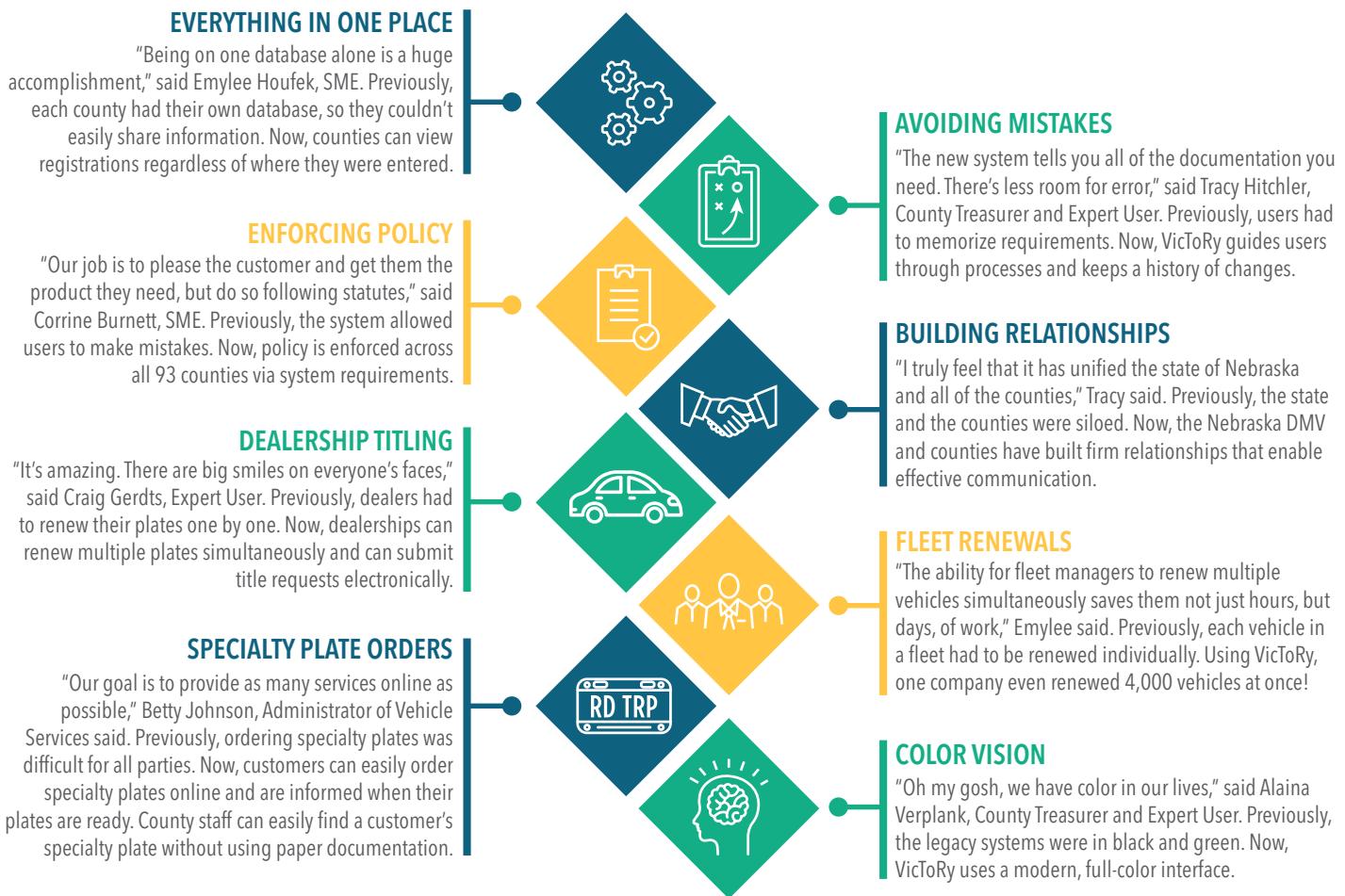


We really did rely on end users and on the County Treasurers to play an important and big role in the project. - Betty Johnson, Administrator of Vehicle Services

Project Highlights



Benefits



Making a Great Team

With so many parties involved, it might seem like there would be too many cooks in the kitchen. Not so, explained Lancaster County Expert User Craig Gerdts. "I think all of the different agencies worked well together," Craig said. A common goal likely inspired their successful collaboration. "Everybody was excited for the potential that VicToRy was going to give us. Everybody wanted to make it the best they could," Craig said. Despite their varied backgrounds, VicToRy project participants formed a cohesive team. "I thought it was very impressive that we had that many people from all over that could come together, become friends, and achieve

a common goal," explained Tracy Hitchler, Expert User. With so many separate ideas, it was inevitable that they occasionally conflicted. However, these differences of opinion were met with respect and cooperation. John Ewing, Douglas County Treasurer, said, "You have a great team when people can be passionate about something, state their opinion, and be respected." The VicToRy team achieved this, enabling the success of the entire project. John continued, "This was the most complex project I've ever worked on. At the same time, because we have such a great team, it's probably one of the most successful I've ever worked on."



John Ewing



The Foundation of Progress

Enabling Transition

Many county and state users participated in the VicToRy project at some point. For those who didn't, exposure to the system came via a series of training and change management efforts. To ensure users had enough time to get familiar with the system, they were required to participate in sandbox sessions—which allowed them to practice realistic scenarios in the system—before attending formal training. Setting aside time for users to participate wasn't easy in a customer-facing business, but County Treasurers saw value in the experience.

"I made sure that everyone had time to play with the system. Everybody had to be familiar with VicToRy," explained Rachel Garver, Lancaster County Treasurer. Allowing users more time to get familiar with VicToRy made it easier to transition to the new system. Corrine Burnett, Douglas County Motor Vehicle Manager, explained her employees' reactions, "Sandbox was a crucial piece of this. That's when they were like, 'Yeah, this is going to work. This is okay.'"

Conversion

While preparing for their modernization project, the Nebraska DMV reached out to several other states to discuss their project successes and failures. "The one thing we heard over and over again was how important data conversion was," Betty Johnson, Administrator of Vehicle Services, said. As a result, the DMV invested in a large cleanup effort. Over the years leading up to and during the VicToRy project, DMV employees, along with help from several other divisions, manually cleaned up over half a million records. "That's something I'm really proud of. When I talk about my staff, those are the

kinds of things I like to brag about," Rhonda Lahm, DMV Director, said. This conversion effort paid off. Of the over 7 million records the DMV converted, only two did not convert correctly. "It's mind-blowing that we could achieve anywhere near that low of a number," said Jonathan Emeigh, Subject Matter Expert (SME).



Left to Right: Michael Brestel, Keith Dey, John Brophy, and Tim Amos



Rachel Garver

Project Name

VicToRy

Project Type

Vehicle Services

Project Dates

March 26, 2018 to
October 15, 2019

Agency Name

Nebraska Department
of Motor Vehicles

Agency Mission

*Exceptional employees
deliver accurate, secure,
and innovative services.*

State Nickname

Cornhusker State

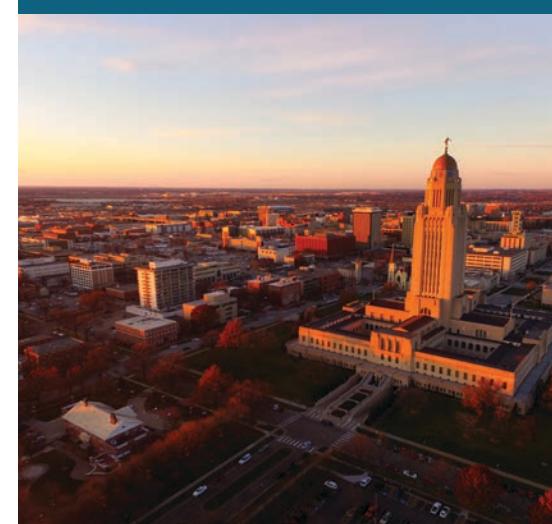
State Soft Drink

Kool-Aid

Invented in Hastings, NE

State Fun Fact

The University of Nebraska holds the longest sellout streak in college athletics, having sold out every home football game since November 3, 1962!



"If you could tell the public one thing, what would it be?"

"You're going to have the capabilities to do so many more things from the privacy of your home."
– Craig Gerdts



"This project was a VicToRy."
– Alaina Verplank



"I was proud that all these people could come together and put out this great product."
– Corrine Burnett

"I hope that they don't dread going to the DMV—that's my goal. I hope VicToRy can give them a positive experience."
– Emylee Houfek

"I'm proud of it, absolutely proud of it. I get goosebumps when I think about it—it's that good of a project."
– John Brophy



"In the long run, this is going to be amazing. It's opened us up to implement new things more quickly."
– Tim Amos

"The timeframe that it takes someone to come in and renew is nothing like it used to be. VicToRy makes everything so much easier."
– Tracy Hitchler



"We left on Friday and came back Tuesday morning and had time-warped 30 years."
– Betty Johnson



"There really is a desire from the government to be able to provide good service to people. It's our responsibility and we take it very seriously."
– Julie Maaske

What's Next

With modern vehicle registration software, the Nebraska DMV is better equipped to address their current and future customer service needs. "VicToRy gives us the ability to continue to build and provide those services, and to get services to customers at their homes and offices," said Betty Johnson, Administrator of Vehicle Services. Guided by this sentiment, the team continues to improve the system. "I think of new things almost every day. I'm always bugging somebody," said Emylee Houfek, Subject Matter Expert. Staff in both DMV and county offices are excited for the flexibility VicToRy provides them. "I know that we will keep evolving, and I like the fact that VicToRy will keep evolving with us," said Alaina Verplank, County Treasurer and Expert User. The team is also eager to maintain VicToRy so that "we don't end up with a 30-year-old system again," said John Ewing, Douglas County Treasurer. Regardless of what changes the future brings, the Nebraska DMV and County Treasurer offices will continue to work together to address the needs of the people of Nebraska. In the words of John Ewing, "Let's continue to be passionate about what we do. In my opinion, if you don't care, you're in the wrong organization."