



SUNFLOWER STATE UNDERSTANDS TAXES WITH SAS®

Kansas Department of Revenue supports robust reporting

Industry

Government

Business Issue

Integrate and optimize taxation, property valuation, motor vehicle and alcohol beverage control data for reporting and analysis.

Solution

SAS® data warehousing and business intelligence solutions.

Benefits

SAS® centralizes information management and gives end users THE POWER TO KNOW®.

Whether filing state income taxes, obtaining a business permit or renewing a driver's license, Kansas residents today are accessing more and more government services online. Through sites like Access Kansas, Trucking Kansas and the Kansas Business Center, the state's Department of Revenue offers a variety of e-government services that promise to simplify citizen and business transactions with state government offices.

As Chief Information Officer for the Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR), Tim Blevins heads the Bureau of Information Services, where he manages the data warehousing and reporting efforts for each of the department's four business units: taxation, property valuation, motor vehicles and alcohol beverage control (ABC). Using SAS for data warehousing, data analysis and reporting, Blevins and his team integrate data from Web transactions with financial data stored in Oracle tables and other internal data sources to provide the business intelligence that managers and executives need to meet agency goals.

"SAS gives us the ability to integrate, analyze and provide information quickly and readily, to wherever it needs to be," says Blevins. His team includes one report designer, three SAS programmers and two database administrators who support nearly 1,100 employees with more than 400 different reports. Available on demand, the information can be accessed online through KDOR's intranet and Internet sites or prepositioned as data sets for power SAS users on the desktop.

"SAS supports the data warehousing and reporting efforts for the entire agency," says Blevins. "Our reports are available not only in this building but across the state as well." From the secretary of revenue and the chief financial officer to business unit managers and ABC field agents, everyone relies on the power of SAS to make data easily available for timely, fact-based decisions.

Supporting a complex data environment

The department's data warehousing efforts allow data integration from every division in KDOR, including data created and managed in each of the state's 105 county offices. Information also comes from county appraisers' offices, motor vehicle registration centers and local businesses that report information to the state revenue agency. While the sources and formats are varied, Blevins says SAS makes it easy to integrate the information into a manageable format so his team can provide advanced query and reporting capabilities to a wide user base.

"SAS gives us the ability to look across functions, to integrate data across divisions and to bring data to one spot for reporting and analysis," says Blevins. That way, vehicle sales tax information can be presented one way for the Taxation Division and another way for the Motor Vehicle Division.

SAS also improves reporting from the department's integrated taxation system, provided by American Management Systems, which contains one integrated data model that supports

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Tim Blevins
Chief Information Officer
Kansas Department of Revenue

all tax types. The history ledger table in this massive system contains as many as 100 million rows, but SAS allows KDOR to look at its data in many ways and to make tax data available in a variety of views, including a comprehensive look at account receivables across tax types and stratified by age.

Predicting effects of budgetary, legislative changes

SAS also supports predictive, what-if capabilities for policy analysts and state administrators, helping them understand the long-term impact of legislative changes. If legislators are considering a change in the rate of withholding tax, for example, SAS can predict how that change will affect citizens in various income brackets and how it will influence the state's budget for the next five years.

“Since our data is already optimized for what-if analysis, we can get those answers to the policy makers within 72 hours, as required by Kansas statute,” says Blevins.

The agency's balanced scorecard also includes forward-looking metrics that are reported on and provided by SAS software. Executives rely on the performance-based budgeting information to make business and financial plans for up to three years into the future.

Reducing support costs, improving data visibility

According to Blevins, SAS brings a number of benefits, including the ability to deliver products to market quickly and to leverage programming work for the future. But most importantly, he says SAS helps reduce the costs for supporting a large business intelligence endeavor – centralizing information management and giving more control to individual business users.

“SAS allows me to keep a very efficient and very reduced support structure while sustaining a large and robust customer reporting environment,” explains Blevins. “We're able

to quickly and efficiently deliver reports and data sets across four different business areas, with a very small staff.”

When approached by other states for advice, Blevins is quick to recommend two things: optimizing data for business intelligence and training end users on how to use the Web-enabled reports from SAS. The combination allows programmers to provide a more effective support structure for end users, and gives the business units the control they need to run their own reports and predictive simulations on demand.

“A lot of organizations don't even know what data is in their systems,” says Blevins. “They can't see it. With SAS, we give our users the ability to open their eyes and not only see the data, but really understand it.”



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