



# Profile: Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office

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—Rose Rozmiarek, chief investigator, Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office

The Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office investigates 450 new fire-related incidents per year and a number of ongoing investigations from prior years. This keeps their 15 field investigators very busy and generates large amounts of paperwork. In the early 1990's, the Fire Marshal's Office tried to streamline the reporting process with a custom-developed database. “The custom system never really worked the way we wanted,” said Rose Rozmiarek, chief investigator, Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office. “We wanted a state-wide system for reporting and tracking fire investigations, but the field investigators couldn't get access to the central database. The system was never really comprehensive, the data wasn't timely, and we couldn't produce the statistics we needed.”

The Fire Marshal's Office created a number of “work arounds” to compensate for the shortcomings of their custom system. The staff maintained three additional systems, including a spiral bound notebook and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, to track key data and produce the reports they needed. They also wanted to include reports from the 150 certified local investigators. Because the system required software to be installed on local computers with disk updates mailed back and forth, they were only able to capture reports from a third of them.

All of The Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office's data access problems disappeared in 2006 when they replaced their custom system with e-Synergy<sup>®</sup> from Exact Software<sup>™</sup>. They researched specialized fire investigation software packages, but found they had many of the limitations of their custom system and still required software to be loaded on each user's computer. e-Synergy has a central data repository that is accessed securely via a Web browser, so it's available anytime, from anywhere. Field investigators can access the system from their wireless-enabled laptops in the field or from any computer at a police or fire station.

## Business Issue

The Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office fire incident reporting database was cumbersome to use and not accessible from the field.

## Impact

The staff used a number of inefficient “work arounds.” The data wasn't timely, they couldn't produce the statistics they needed and they couldn't share information with other agencies.

## Solution

The Fire Marshal's Office implemented a new incident tracking system based on e-Synergy<sup>®</sup> from Exact Software<sup>™</sup> that is available from anywhere, anytime and replaces paper-based processes with automated workflow requests.

## Results

- Kansas now has a state-wide system for tracking information about fire investigations and sharing it with all the necessary stakeholders.
- Processes have been streamlined —eliminating re-work, reducing costs, and drastically increasing access to information.
- Closed loop procedures have been instituted to make sure nothing is overlooked during an investigation.
- The Fire Marshal's Office can tailor the system to their ongoing needs, securing their investment for years to come.



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"The availability of information for my investigators is amazing," said Rozmiarek. "We are as paperless as paperless can be with e-Synergy. My investigators are spread across the state, not in the office. There used to be a lot of paper mailed back and forth between field investigators and the office. Now everything is scanned in. There's no more double or triple entering the information and we've saved a ton of money on postage. It's truly real-time, with no lag between when information is entered and when it's available to be utilized."

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"For the first time, we truly have a state-wide database," said Rozmiarek. "It used to be if an investigation started on one side of the state and lead to activities on the other side, the investigator would have to wait days for the case documents to arrive in the mail before interviewing a suspect. Now, the information is available instantly. Also, we are in the process of adding all the 150 or so certified local investigators through a portal. Since they don't have to install software or worry about compatibility, we are looking forward to 100-percent participation and the ability to work together like never before."

e-Synergy is much more than a data repository, it's a collaboration platform that has streamlined the investigation process and increased teamwork between the investigators and with outside agencies. Each step of an investigation is managed as an automated workflow request. As the workflow requests are completed, the case file is built. A Crystal report creates the final investigation report. Therefore, investigators spend less time writing reports and more time managing their tasks. Rozmiarek can see what all of her field investigators are doing and can find out the status of an investigation at a moments notice.

Paper-based procedures, like training requests, have been replaced with e-Synergy's workflow requests. Loose ends that used to bog down case investigation, such as lab analysis, have been closed. When an investigator submits material to the lab for analysis, the results are sent back to the office, not the investigator in the field. Now, the investigator submits a workflow request each time and the staff at the office can keep track of lab requests and close the loop.

Using the calendar function, the investigators can instantly see each other's availability. This is especially helpful for scheduling specialized resources such as the polygraph examiner or canine investigator. The Marshal's Office works with 600 local fire departments, 300 law enforcement agencies, the district attorney's office, and the court system. Now, all the contact information investigators need is at their fingertips in e-Synergy. "Under the old system, the investigators had to call the office a lot," said Rozmiarek. "I don't hear from them much anymore."

"We bought e-Synergy as a reporting tool and it has become so much more," said Rozmiarek. "One of the biggest advantages of e-Synergy is the ability to tailor it to our needs. I can add a check box or create a whole new request type without calling a consultant. We're excited by all the possibilities. We're going to start tracking our inventory in e-Synergy and then look into linking our database with the National Fire Incident Reporting System. We feel we've only touched the tip of the iceberg of what we can do."

For more information about Exact Software, please call your certified business partner or account representative today or visit [www.exactamerica.com](http://www.exactamerica.com).