

VIRGINIA

TOWN & CITY

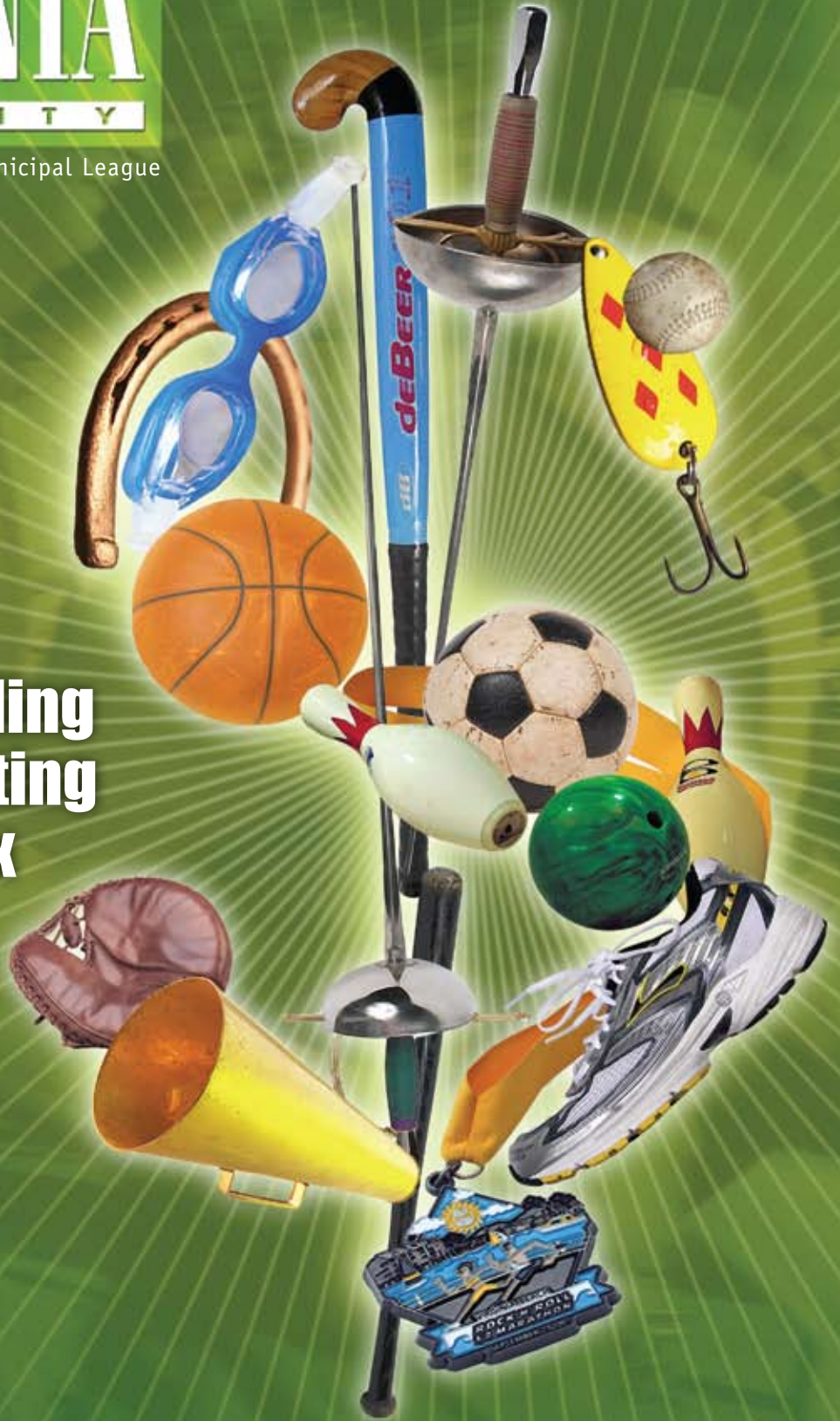
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Localities adding sports marketing to tourism mix



Touting trees
See page 2



Bedford GIS initiative paying dividends

THE CITY OF Bedford offers an outstanding example of the diverse benefits that can result from a well-integrated Geographic Information System (GIS).

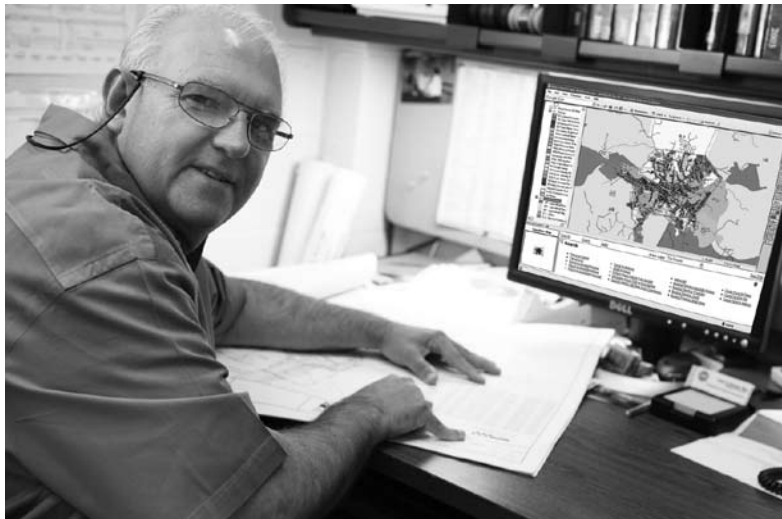
In 2002, city officials recognized the need for a more efficient way to collect and access commonly requested data such as utility and boundary information. The city retained Anderson & Associates to design and implement a highly accessible enterprise GIS system. Enterprise GIS is an organization-wide approach to GIS implementation, operation and management. It integrates spatial data and technology across an organization, linking centralized management with decentralized use. Today, the GIS system continues to meet the continuously-changing needs of Bedford and its residents.

Anderson provided data migration and automation services for land parcel, building inspection, zoning classification, water distribution, sewer collection, storm water conveyance, and electric utility mapping. This information was integrated seamlessly into the WebGIS government portal. Bedford Building Official Jimmy English directed the GIS project locally, working closely with the city's GIS team. That team included all city departments and community leaders in real estate, the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Bedford, and many others.

The city team still works closely with Anderson & Associates to ensure that the data linked to the GIS site is up-to-date. Current information is one of the most important features of

a successful GIS site and this is only accomplished by open communication between city departments, as well as surrounding localities. By sharing data with one another, each department and municipality can access and use valuable information.

In fact, Bedford has no restrictions on access to the GIS site other than those mandated by the state. By allowing unrestricted access, possibilities



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for the site are unlimited. Not only is the site useful to the general public, it has become vital in community development and planning. It has also become an important tool for economic development.


The online site is user-friendly, and allows anyone from practically anywhere to quickly access property and tax information, including vacancy and landowner information. Aerial photographs are linked to the site, allowing users to actually see the property. Realtors and homeowners utilize the site regularly, and visitors to Bedford can locate popular attractions, historical landmarks, and places of interest, enhancing tourism opportunities.

Plans for the site continue to evolve. In the future, the city hopes to link more data, such as floor plans for all major buildings, to the site. This will assist emergency services personnel and enable them to perform more quickly and efficiently.

GIS technology provides municipalities with the capability to visualize and interpret data at many locations and on many levels. It

provides a framework for communication by allowing people to share information. The uses of such a tool and the positive impact that those uses can have on municipal governments are emerging daily as cities like Bedford stretch their imaginations and their data-based analyses.

Bedford, along with other municipalities in Virginia, works daily to ensure the health, safety and welfare of residents. Meet-

ing those responsibilities effectively requires managing an extraordinary amount of information. GIS facilitates these tasks and enables municipal officials to serve their communities more effectively. 

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