SERVING MORE VETERANS VIA MODERN CUSTOM SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

THE CUSTOMER
Butler County Veterans Commission

INDUSTRY
Government Agency

THE SOLUTIONS
Custom-built software and database management solution

BENEFITS

• 100% uptime

• Improved database design

• Reduced workload for a small team

• Stability for 30,000 veterans and dependents

• Modernized code repository

THE SITUATION

From their headquarters in the Greater Cincinnati area, the Butler County Veterans Commission (BCVSC) provides vital services for the local veterans of the United States Armed Forces. To the more than 25,000 veterans and their dependents living in the county, the BCVSC offers no-cost VA claims assistance, financial assistance, medical transportation and much more.

Whether they're on the front lines providing emergency assistance to veterans or acting as a nexus to connect veterans with other services, the BCVSC operates around the clock tackling a myriad of challenges.

Being nimble is instrumental to the BCVSC's noble work. In 2024, that meant employing modern software solutions to support its operations. The BCVSC had been using an in-house piece of software that allowed local veterans to schedule no-cost transportation. However, the home-baked software program was beginning to show its age. It used Microsoft C# and Microsoft

Access to schedule thousands of transportation rides on an annual basis. That's an incredibly heavy workload, one that would regularly lock up their software, rendering it unusable.

All in all, it was starting to be obvious that what they had wasn't a modern solution . In the fall of 2023, BCVSC Executive Director Mike Farmer saw it plainly: "It was just dated technology that needed to be brought into the 21st century."

To that end, the BCVSC issued a Request fFor Proposal (RFP), outlining what they sorely needed: a technology vendor who could develop a software integration that provided the ability to schedule, report on, and manage the BCVSC's transportation program, while also condensing databases and mitigating any security risks.

THE SOLUTION

One of the companies that responded to the BCVSC's RFP was Atomic Data. While Atomic Data is perhaps best known for their 24x7 monitoring and support services and their technology wins in supporting the sports and entertainment industry, the Minneapolis-based managed IT service provider also offers a well-equipped software development team versed in mobile app development, API integrations, database work, and much more.

> ## "It was dated technology that needed to be brought into the 21st century."
>
> – Mike Farmer, Executive Director

It's this software development team that outlined a solution that the BCVSC couldn't help but be excited with. "It was like opening your favorite comic book," commended Mike Farmer. "It was a dream come true; it had everything we needed."

Happy with what they read in Atomic Data's proposal, Farmer and his team in Ohio selected them for the project. Atomic Data's software engineers got to work, which would ultimately include user interface (UI) changes and significant updates to the backend of the BCVSC's software.

To start the project, Atomic Data wanted to modernize the BCVSC's codebase. At the time, the BCVSC only had a singular production codebase with no source modern code management solution in place. Atomic Data used Azure DevOps to allow the

BCVSC to store their code in a repository. This repository also housed tasks, sprints, and other project items, empowering the BCVSC to accurately gauge project status.

Next up was the establishment of production and testing environments for BCVSC. The testing environment allowed the team at the BCVSC to preview all changes they made to their codebase before they were pushed to the production environment. Atomic Data's engineers also developed automated pipeline builds based on branch and pull requests. These ensure that code is updated, tested, and verified before deploying into each environment.

One issue that Atomic Data's engineers encountered during the project was the BCVSC's database. The database had multiple issues, including duplicated locations and the omission of several locations in Cincinnati. Atomic Data worked alongside the BCVSC to migrate the existing data from Microsoft Access to a Microsoft SQL Server (MS SQL), and then update the application to utilize MS SQL with object-oriented frameworks, such as Entity Framework. Following this, Atomic Data's software engineers were able to integrate a more user-friendly UI, with autofill input fields and best match suggestions on various fields.

The BCSVC needed the ability to record and retrieve known transportation routes easily. To meet this need, Atomic Data introduced an interface for mileage inputs, where users would select locations for the beginning and end of journeys. Where information was unknown, the program would query the Google

Maps API to calculate the mileage of the most efficient routes for BCSVC drivers, determining the cost of the trips.

BCVSC's database contains sensitive information for their veterans, so code and site security was essential. Atomic Data implemented a schedule of SAST and DAST scans to ensure the code remains up to date of known vulnerabilities and security concerns. The process ensures all code is tested and verified that no known vulnerabilities or security problems existed in the code base, or the third-party applications utilized. They used shift-left testing and Qwiet to do the Static Application Security Testing (SAST), which in turn generated a report for the BCVSC to review. This report included any security vulnerabilities and empowered both Atomic Data and the BCVSC team to prioritize

and remediate any code issues.

As an extra measure of security, Atomic Data implemented an identity management solution that enables user login with multi-factor authentication. This feature was important to both parties to further define their security best practices, but it also enabled BCVCS admins to better manage their application users.

"It was a dream come true. It had everything we needed."

– Mike Farmer, Executive Director

As the project ended, Atomic Data worked with the BCVSC to develop SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) reports based on their own internal requirements. Atomic Data's Minneapolis-based developers worked with the BCVSC's Cincinnati-based system admins to familiarize them with reporting process through walkthroughs and mentorship. Atomic Data's engineers were able to facilitate trainings, both on Zoom and in-person, to teach both admins and end-users about the new program, equipping them with the skills to manage, troubleshoot, and optimize it. When it came to the project overall, Atomic Data had "plans A, B, C, D, and E" according to Mike Farmer.

It's clear that the skill and care that Atomic Data's engineers bring to the table was key in bringing the two organizations together. "These days, customer service isn't what it once was. But Atomic Data is top notch when it comes to customer service," concluded Farmer

"Atomic Data is top notch when it comes to customer service."

– Mike Farmer, Executive Director

CONCLUSION

In the end, the BCVSC modernized operations and software in every way that they set out to. Their new software solutions eased their operations and empowered their staff to act as nimbly as they needed to, ultimately allowing them to expand their reach to veterans in need. "We were facing a 25-year hole. Had three databases with the same PII. We took databases down to two. What used to take the staff 45 minutes to do, now takes them 5-7 to do," mentioned Mike Farmer. "I would say we've reduced workload significantly. We're small, but we serve over 30,000, and we need accurate programs. We need 100% uptime. Not only is it saving us staff. It's saving us money."

For the BCVSC and the veterans whom it serves, it was a successful project on all fronts. Farmer, however, would like to take it a step further. "I think we've built the solution to solve Ohio's problems, that all 88 counties in Ohio should adopt… Atomic Data's developers developed the perfect program. This is state of the art."

"Atomic Data's developers developed the perfect program. This is state of the art."

— *Mike Farmer, Executive Director for the Butler County Veterans Commission*

Ready to get to work on your next app?

GET STARTED - CONTACT AN EXPERT

ATOMICdata.

250 Marquette Ave, Suite 225, Minneapolis, MN 55401 | 612.466.2000 | 1.800.285.5179
atomicdata.com