Division of Construction Management (DCM) Update January 2021

DCM Overview

- + One of three divisions of Real Property Management under Department of Finance; Act 2015-435 <u>established</u> "centralization, ... comprehensive real property asset management practices to achieve immediate and long-term cost savings and cost avoidance..."; assumed duties/authorities of Building Commission, other responsibilities.
- + Primary Functions Contract Administration, Plan Review, Construction Inspection, Project Management, Construction Industry Craft Training, and Home Inspection Licensing.
- + <u>Provides independent, unbiased, third-party plan review and inspection</u> primarily to state agencies and educational institutions to ensure code compliance (fire, life safety, building, etc.) and adherence to state law.
- + Achieves cost savings and avoidance by providing services state-wide with one-deep staffing in plan review, and with strategically placed regional inspectors. <u>DCM is completely self-funded (fee-for-service)</u>.
- + Reviewers/Inspectors are <u>experts in code compliance and conformance</u>; they are effective because that is their only job. Average experience: Plan Reviewers 28 yrs; Inspectors 28 yrs; RPM/DCM Directors 38.5 years.
- + Average plan review time for ALL projects/ALL customers for 2015-2019 was 6.43 calendar days.

				2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	5-YEAR AVG
	# Plans Submitted/Reviewed			1484	1637	1697	1646	1604	1614
AN REVIEW	f at	ALL ENTITIES		6.02	6.82	7.58	5.90	5.76	6.43
	Average # of Calendar Days a DCM	ustomer	State Agencies	5.73	5.22	7.22	5.88	5.33	5.90
			ALSDE/K-12	5.34	6.77	7.16	5.59	5.47	6.07
			ACCS/2-Year	6.43	6.42	5.92	5.89	4.94	5.89
PL		ರ	Universities	6.75	7.43	8.11	5.91	6.10	6.95
		By	Muni/County	8.45	7.92	10.53	9.12	7.33	8.64
INSPECTIONS		# Performed		2380	2441	2522	2584	2740	2539

+ <u>No change in fees</u> since DCM moved to fee-for-service in 2014. <u>DCM fees for plan review and inspection</u>, when compared to cities and counties in Alabama, <u>are at the low end</u>. In addition to final review, DCM also provides schematic review, preliminary review, and an additional revised final review (if necessary) for no additional fee.

	PLAN REVIEW AND INSPECTION FEES (High To Low)												
\$\$\$ <<<<<<< > PERMITTING AUTHORITY <<<<<< > \$													
Gulf Shores	Birmingham	Jefferson County	Tuscaloosa	Opelika	Montgomery	Huntsville	Madison	Baldwin County	Mobile	Tallapoosa County	Auburn	DCM	Dothan

In April 2019, a new Director of Real Property Management was hired. Coming to the state with 32 years' experience in design and construction management, the new Director placed the primary focus on customer service, project/process transparency, technology improvements, and effective communications. In 2020, DCM implemented a Strategic Plan to improve on quality, timeliness, and professionalism in their approach to service.

2020 Accomplishments

Overhaul of Manual of Procedures, Forms, Etc.

+ Major overhaul/update of entire Manual of Procedures, Forms, Instructions, and Checklists. The primary goal was to provide updated guidance, requirements, and tools to all customers in a clear, straightforward, and easy-to-follow manner. Response has been overwhelmingly positive.

Focus on Customer Feedback

+ Implemented customer feedback process that included creation of a dedicated email box for all customers to provide feedback, suggestions, and questions. Feedback is submitted easily by email or fill-in form from RPM and DCM websites. Submissions go directly to the mailbox personally monitored by both the RPM and DCM Directors. Responses are provided back to the submitter the same day or by next business day, unless they have chosen to remain anonymous. Owners and architects have made good use of the new feedback tools.

Developed a New Website

+ Developed and published brand-new website (www.dcm.alabama.gov) that provides a wealth of information and resources to customers, with a focus on ease of use, information access, and customer communication. The new site is more comprehensive, resources are readily available/downloadable, feedback/comments/questions are easily submitted (anonymously if desired), and every DCM staff member's contact information (name, job, phone number, email address) is provided to encourage direct communication. Again, response has been overwhelmingly positive. Updates are made as needed since DCM now directly manages the website content.

Informational Presentations

- + RPM and DCM leadership continue to participate in numerous conferences and meetings, providing information and updates to customers (owners, architects, and contractors) whenever and wherever possible. In just the past 16 months, the DCM Director and/or RPM Director have formally presented at:
 - 09/2019 Association of Building Contractors (ABC) Facilities Directors and Constructors Conf
 - 11/2019 K-12 New Superintendent Orientation (NSO)
 - 12/2019 Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) Quarterly Meeting
 - 12/2019 American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) Winter Conference
 - 02/2020 K-12 Chief Financial Officers (AASBO) Annual Conference
 - 09/2020 ABC PSCA Bond Issue Webinar
 - 09/2020 ACEC Virtual Client Meeting
 - 11/2020 K-12 New Superintendent Orientation (NSO)
 - 12/2020 Alabama Association of School Business Officials (AASBO) Meeting

Use of Focus Groups

+ DCM formed a focus group of architectural firms familiar with DCM processes to seek input and recommendations on how to improve those processes and provide better customer service. Initial results from the focus group are proving to be invaluable.

DCM Spotlights

+ DCM published several articles spotlighting their processes and people. In 2020, articles were published in the Alabama AIA newsletter, Montgomery AIA newsletter, and by Alabama Bd. of Engineers and Land Surveyors.

2021 Initiatives

Electronic Tracking System- always know where documents are located

+ RPM is actively working with State Purchasing to procure and implement new, state-of-the-art IWMS/CMMS software to better manage the work of their three divisions. Legacy systems and databases will be replaced, ensuring more effective construction management by DCM staff. Features will include mobile and desktop access by owners, architects, and contractors, providing transparency and better communication on their projects.

Electronic Plan Review, Invoicing, and more

+ RPM/DCM is in the process of moving to paperless processes wherever possible. They are currently meeting internally and with legal support and OIT to work out implementation details. Processes that will be moving quickly to electronic format include plan review, contract document administration (contracts, O/A agreements, amendments, change orders), architect and contractor invoicing, leases, and more.

Electronic Signatures

+ A key component of successfully moving to paperless processes, the approval to accept electronic signatures, has been in the works for more than a year and is now approved. Working with Finance Legal Division, Governor's Legal, and OIT, a new administrative rule governing the use and acceptance of e-signatures and e-records was finalized in September, certified in November, and approved on January 14, 2021. The division is now working with legal and OIT to incorporate electronic signatures into all processes, quickly moving to paperless.

More Focus Groups, Spotlights, and Newsletter

+ DCM is planning for new focus groups that will include owners (state agencies, school systems) and contractors. They will also continue spotlighting their processes and people in trade publications. Additionally, a monthly newsletter is in the planning stages that will provide DCM updates, code highlights, project spotlights, and more.

The Division of Construction Management has made great advances in recent years and will continue to implement strategic practices that streamline process while following the laws of Alabama and protecting the safety of, and investments in, Alabama's infrastructure and its citizens.