



## CASE STUDY: Beaver County, PA

### Leave it to Beaver.....County, that is!

When George Washington first explored the region in the 1770's, he wrote in his journal, "At 11 we came to the mouth of Beaver Creek opposite to which is a good situation for a house, and above it, on the same side (that is the West) there appears to be a fine body of land." In the 1890's, Britain's Poet Laureate, Rudyard Kipling, described the area. "Imagine a rolling wooded English landscape, with the softest of blue skies, dotted at three mile intervals by fat, quiet villages . . .".

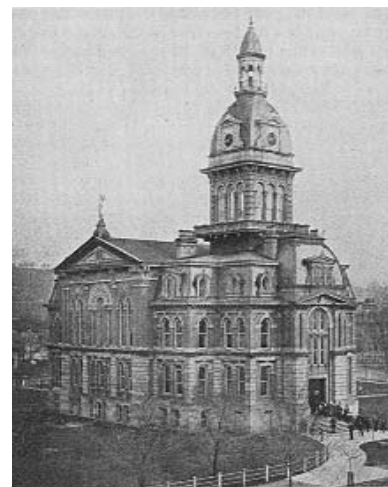
Regardless of how you view Beaver County, most people agree that it is a unique place. Since its creation on March 12, 1800, the town of Beaver has been the seat of this county known for its beauty, hospitality, and the industrious nature of its inhabitants. Named for the Beaver Creek, which flows from the surrounding hills into the Ohio River, Beaver County is located at the western border of Pennsylvania. It is home to a population of over 186,000 people.

Early in its history, residents recognized that they needed to plan for the future growth of the county. In May of 1877, Judge Daniel Agnew spoke these words at the dedication of a newly constructed Court House.

"A new court-house had been sorely needed for years. Not only had the old one become unsuitable, unsafe, unhealthy and uncomfortable, but the division of the former offices among a greater number of persons, and the creation of new offices, and the accumulation of records, papers, and record books, the increase of population, and vast change in the subjects and character of litigation heretofore described, and other causes, all rendered a new building adapted to the wants of the present day an absolute necessity."

The courthouse dedicated by Judge Agnew was a beautiful Victorian style building with statues perched atop its bell tower. This impressive structure was expected to last for at least 100 years. Sadly, the building did not make it. On May 26, 1932 painters who were attempting to dry their work with a blowtorch, accidentally ignited an old bird's nest on the building. The fire spread quickly, and severely damaged the building- along with most of the records inside.

Today, these same issues (working room, paperwork, and disaster recovery) are facing Mr. Chuck Hilt, Director of Micrographics, and his fellow staff members at the Beaver County Courthouse. The existing facility was aging, and space grew tight. Plans to build another courthouse – the fifth one in two hundred years- are underway. The workload to handle more documents, records, and general paperwork continues to grow. Safekeeping of records and disaster recovery remain important tasks. "We really needed to improve our efficiency in handling of paper records" states Mr. Hilt. "In the past, everything was stored in underground mines- making handling and retrieval a time-consuming chore. Now, we have everything captured in a digital format that allows us to search and retrieve information quickly."



Until it was destroyed by fire in 1932, the Beaver County Courthouse was an impressive display of Victorian architecture.

To tackle this problem, Mr. Hilt turned to Systems Imaging for recommendations on a robust imaging solution that would be flexible enough to handle the needs for all of the county's departments. " We were looking for a system that is easy-to-use, but would allow us to manage documents in various ways such as CD distribution, network and Web retrieval, and microfilm."

In the Micrographics department, Systems Imaging installed EMC/Documentum's Xtender solution and configured it to work with their existing Fujitsu scanners and Kodak Digital Archive Writer. Xtender manages the digital images and microfilm copies are created from the Digital Archive Writer. In addition, sensitive legal documents for the District Attorney's office are written to CDs and easily managed using the Xtender Viewer software. The county makes very good use of the Internet by posting much of its document repository (especially resolutions and meeting minutes) on-line using the WebXtender Solution. Members of the staff who have viewing permission can easily access all approved documents.

Since implementing the imaging system two years ago, the county has steadily expanded its usage. Future plans call for the imaging of maps for their public works department, records for the Register of Wills, and financial documents for their treasury department. Regardless of their decision to build new, or remain in the existing facility, Chuck and his people will be ready to handle the growing demands of Beaver County.