Green it Forward
Streamlined Online HVAC Permitting Program
for Cities & Counties of California

Imperial Valley Update

Presented by John Carrieri

Pilot Objectives

- Build a streamline online HVAC permitting system to help California meet its goal of 90% compliance by 2020

- Have building departments provide real-world feedback about the program

- Collect feedback from HVAC contractors

- Discover the need for additional enhancements and/or refinements to the software

- Show that an online permitting system is user friendly, easy to implement, and is time and cost efficient.

Pilot Participants & References

- **City of El Centro**
- **City of Imperial**
- **City of Calexico**
- **City Of Brawley**
- **Enalasys Master Sponsor**
- **Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**
- **SBA**
- **2 Imperial Valley Contractors during whole Pilot**
- **4 Total Imperial Valley Contractors**
- **2 CALBO interest events**

Pilot Primary Time-frame

2nd Qtr 2014 – 3rd Qtr 2015
18 months

Permits Pulled Online - Contractors

- 195 Permits pulled online.
  - 4 Contractors

Majority pulled by primary two participating contractors that were the involved during the whole Pilot.

Permits Pulled by Jurisdiction

195 Permits Total pulled in Pilot:
El Centro (Population 45,305 ^) **: 73 permits pulled**
Calexico (Population 40,660^) **: 73 permits Pulled**
Brawley (Population 26,629^) **: 33 permits Pulled**
City of Imperial (Population 18,190^) **: 16 Pulled**
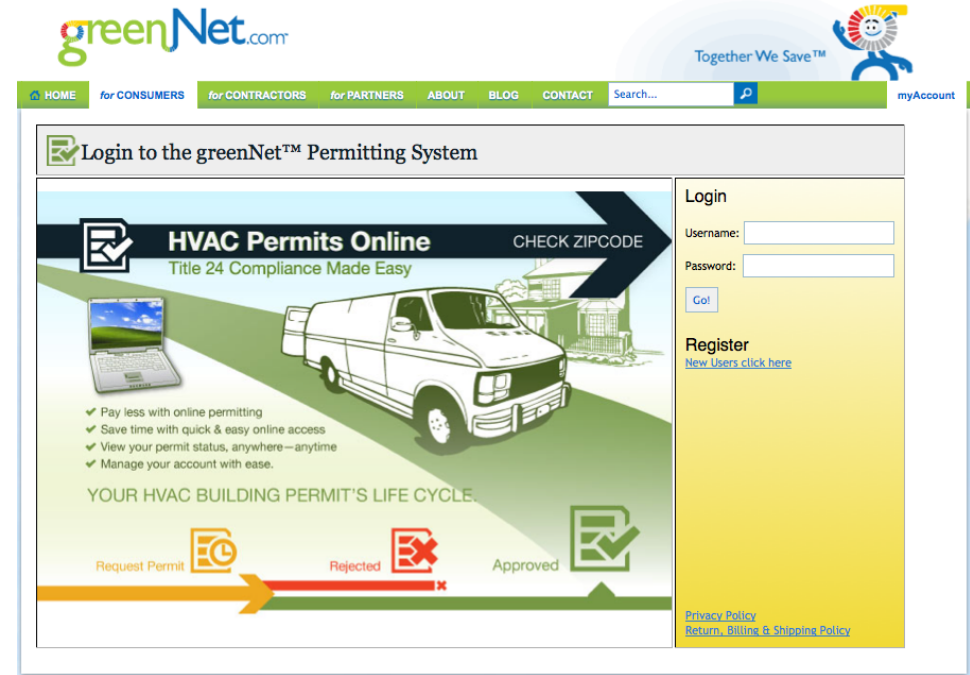
California Total Population: 39,189,035^

Best Practices for Building Departments:

- Ease of use is very important.
- CSLB license & insurance verification is vital.
- Building Departments prefer a no-cost system.
- Building Departments see value in increased revenue due to more contractors pulling permits and increasing compliance.
- Incorporate Building Department different processes and requirements.
- Building Department want to keep their own internal numbering systems.
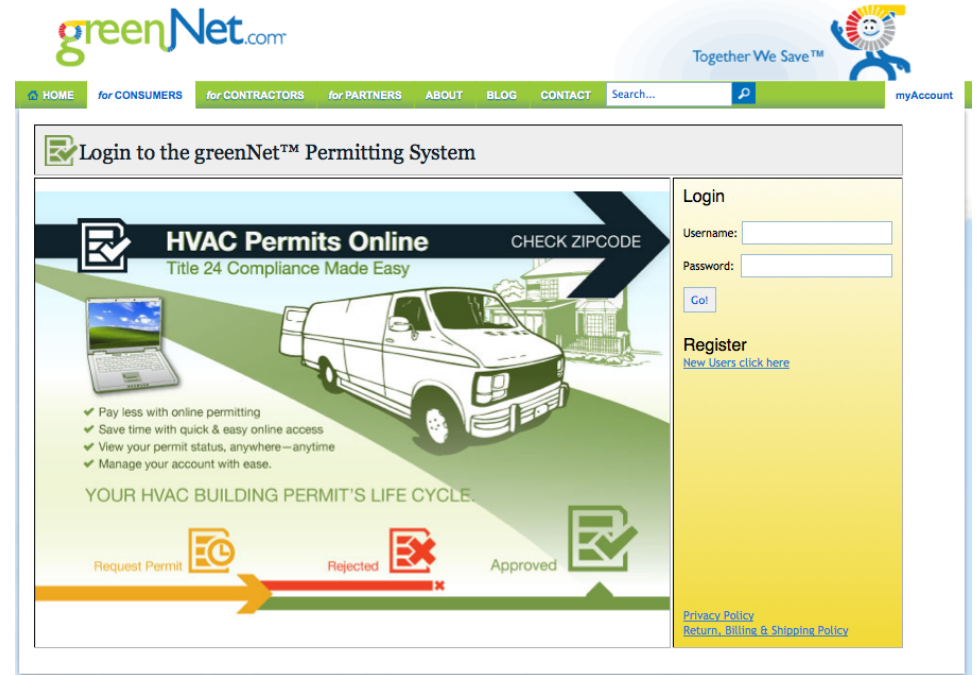- Certified document automation is important.

Best Practices for Contractors:

- Must be intuitive to use
- Cost effective.
- Must incorporate Building Department different processes and requirements.
- Prefers little interaction with building department personnel
- Permits must be immediately approved or at least same day
- Accept major credit cards
- All documentation must be accessible online and sent via email when Permits are approved and remain online for download for future proof of compliance.

Additional Best Practices for Streamline Online Permitting to succeed.

- **Mandating bulk payments back to Building Departments be done via electronic funds transfer. ie: ACH (No checks that can be lost in the mail.)**
- **Live checking from the online permitting system of CSLB.gov site to verify Contractor's license and insurance status – reduces load on permit technicians.**

Pilot Best Practices & Lessons

- The majority of building departments in each region, need to participate as a region is rolled out.

- Building departments have initial resistance due to the unknowns / risks of implementing something new.

- Need to resolve address jurisdictional issues, particularly in unincorporated areas at the jurisdiction's perimeter. City vs. County? We noted this with our suggestion to add to the permitting committee's new survey that is being circulated.

- Contractors do not want to expose themselves unless all contractors pull permits.

Pilot Best Practices & Lessons Continued

- Contractors resistance is to the <u>Total</u> cost of compliance.

- Contractors want to collect their money from the building owners as quickly as possible. They view permitting and building department requirements as a hindrance.

- Level the playing field and a substantial amount of contractors would pull and close permits.

- Marketing, training, education and support coming from the State would increase adoption from both Building Departments and Contractors

Pilot Achievements:

- **Proved out online permitting technology.**

- **Proved to be a substantial improvement to the paper / in person permitting process.** (Reduces vehicle / gas emissions of two trips to BD).

- **Demonstrated an online multi-jurisdictional permitting system is possible.**

- **Incorporated several different Building Departments unique needs such as city license for Calexico, Parcel numbers for Brawley and Inspections.** (Note: These are reasonable expectations that other jurisdictions will want or require and were good to understand in the pilot program.)

- **Built and integrated a live license and insurance checking feature into the online permitting system to CSLB.ca.gov site.**

- **Proved adding a new building department, even with customized features, can be done in 1 day vs. over 6 months as reported by Building departments of some software systems.**

Future Pilot

- **Roll out pilot to additional building departments outside of the Imperial Valley to higher population counties.**

- **Roll out pilot to a larger base of HVAC contractors 50+. Already have signed letters of 7 Contractors willing to participate. Can obtain many more when ready.**

- **API has been built to work with <u>all</u> HERS Registries.**

- **Serial Number tracking feature / option has been built that would help compliance adoption.**

- **Add feature to turn in permit violators to CSLB.**