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## UTILITY PLAYER

### Gateway and Tacoma set the standard.

Tacoma, Wash., works hard to offer the best service it can to City residents. Much of that service delivery falls on the shoulders of Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU), one of the nation’s largest and oldest public utility companies. Publicly owned since 1893, TPU boasts nearly 1,200 employees, and all operations are funded by sales of service, not taxes. Besides traditional utilities, TPU manages an extremely diverse array of resources — everything from hydroelectric dams and fisheries to parks and railroads.

Recently, TPU added another service to its expansive repertoire, a cable television and data network known as the Click! Network <[www.click-network.com](http://www.click-network.com)>. With so many services being offered, the City needed a robust and flexible IT infrastructure. Tacoma recently completed a massive implementation of ERP software from SAP, and a crucial part of that upgrade included standardizing on reliable Gateway PCs and notebooks.

#### MEETING MULTIPLE NEEDS

Rick Clark is a Senior Technical Analyst in Business Information Systems, which serves the City of Tacoma, Tacoma Public Utilities, and Click! Network. He said the City chose Gateway because of the company’s reputation for quality products, great service and affordability.

“Not too many companies can say they manage parks, fisheries, dams, an airport, an event dome, convention center, arts theater, senior service centers, a steam plant, a railroad, bill pay-

ing stations, firefighters, police, courts, numerous mobile users; and also bill for water, power, refuse, storm drainage, sewer, rail, cable TV and high-speed data services; and more,” he said. “I think Tacoma is a very unique business in that respect — and the stability, availability and performance of the IT infrastructure necessary for all of these various lines of business to work are testament to our success with implementing Gateway products.”

TPU started partnering with Gateway in 2002 when the City began upgrading its IT infrastructure in anticipation of the SAP deployment. At that time, Tacoma <[www.cityoftacoma.org](http://www.cityoftacoma.org)> needed Gateway’s top-of-the-line PC as soon as it was available. Gateway came to task and delivered by providing Tacoma with the very first E-6000 computers straight from the assembly line. Since then, Gateway has been the standard for the City of Tacoma, Tacoma Public Utilities and Click! Network.

“It’s interesting, we have a distributed IT environment and departments are responsible for procuring and managing their own PC assets and line of business applications,” said Clark. “We have no method of enforcing standards; however, we have had great success with the Gateway platform. I believe our customers in the departments can see the value of standardizing on one good familiar platform and thus we have a strong de facto standard of Gateway desktops and notebooks.”

Of course, other vendors have tried to sway Tacoma from Gateway, but none have matched the combination of products, service and support that Gateway offers, let alone cost.

“Based on our success and total cost of ownership returns, we have no reason to attempt to purchase lower-end or consumer-based models,” said Clark. “The E-6000s we purchased in 2002 are

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

#### AGENCY:

City of Tacoma, Wash.

#### MISSION:

Provide high-quality, innovative and cost-effective municipal services that enhance the lives of Tacoma citizens and the vitality of neighborhoods and businesses through teamwork, integrity and continuous improvement in partnership with the community.

#### AGENCY:

Tacoma Public Utilities

#### MISSION:

Tacoma Public Utilities provides competitive, environmentally responsible electric, water and rail services through teamwork, technology and innovation.

#### TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVE:

Procure affordable, reliable PCs and notebooks to facilitate a massive IT infrastructure modernization and standardization.

#### GATEWAY SOLUTION:

Gateway provided top-notch technology, reliability and service at unmatched affordability.

#### ROI:

Gateway desktop and notebook PCs have proven so reliable, flexible and cost-effective that Tacoma Public Utilities anticipates a six-year life cycle for the equipment, resulting in cost and time savings.

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still in service and some of those have received a memory upgrade to 1 GB but otherwise, they are current business workstations that we expect to see another two to three years out of. Since then, we have continued to promote a de facto standard that has continued through the E-6100, E-6300 and now the E-6500 desktop models.”

To facilitate Tacoma’s SAP implementation, Gateway imaged the City’s initial batch of 500 E-6000s with anti-virus software, Microsoft Office Professional and the latest operating system updates. In addition, Tacoma uses Microsoft Systems Management Server to distribute software upgrades to its Gateway PCs remotely. Gateway® E-Series desktops feature Intel® Pentium® 4 processors with HT Technology<sup>1</sup> for maximum performance and adaptability.

**SERVICE DELIVERY**

With some 3,000 Gateway E-Series desktop PCs now in service, TPU finds its relationship with Gateway as valuable as the PCs.

“We have a special arrangement with Gateway for our support folks to contact the company’s escalation engineers directly,” Clark explained. “That way, when we need service, we bypass the folks who deal with the queue of home users and small businesses. These engineers recognize that they are talking with other IT specialists and this makes for a much more efficient use of time and quicker resolution for our customers.”

Fortunately Clark doesn’t deal with equipment failure often. For TPU, the City of Tacoma and Click! Network, Gateway lives up to its reputation for reliability and service.

“I have to say that we seldom have an out-of-box failure and when something like a hard drive fails, it’s really nice to just e-mail the serial number of the box, and the next morning a new replacement hard drive returns with RMA [Return Merchandise Authorization] labeling for the old drive,” said Clark. “Gateway doesn’t make these drives, but they service them as if they did, and we’re impressed with their responsiveness.”

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Reliability, affordability and service delivery are critically important to the success of the City of Tacoma and TPU’s business. As such, the organization expects nothing less from its technology providers. Gateway delivers the same excellent service to TPU as TPU provides to its customers. Part of that service means providing PCs that accommodate ever-changing technology.



**Gateway® E-Series Desktops with Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology<sup>1</sup> provides the performance and adaptability TPU needs to succeed.**

“We still have many pre-6000 series desktops in service today, which demonstrates that we are indeed seeing a life cycle of four to five years out of even the older Gateway machines,” said Clark. “I would expect up to a six-year life cycle for the 6000 series machines; and who knows if Vista, Microsoft’s 64-bit operating system, will have a killer application or become a business need that forces us to deploy that OS across the enterprise one day in the next few years? If so, the machines we are buying now, the E-6500s, are processor-ready for that OS.”

For TPU and Tacoma in general, Gateway is a valuable partner as the City updates its IT infrastructure to meet present and future needs. In fact, Clark is so pleased with the relationship, he recommends Gateway to other municipalities.

“With over 3,000 computers to manage, we owe it to our rate payers and taxpayers to responsibly purchase our computers and avoid the hidden costs of frequent turnover, nonstandardization, and bargains that are too good to be true,” Clark said. “The least expensive part of purchasing a PC is the initial PC purchase itself — it’s all the other less tangible but very real costs that add up when you don’t purchase right.

“A few months ago, I was contacted by the City of Portland, Ore., as they were shopping for a computer manufacturer to standardize on,” he added. “I gave Portland a very strong recommendation for Gateway and shared our configuration and pricing with them.”



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