

## WEST ACRES DEVELOPMENT, LLP

### Solution Overview

#### Industry

Retail

#### Microsoft Business Solutions Partner

Business Microvar, Inc.  
 Fargo, North Dakota, USA

#### Scenario

West Acres Development needed a database that could produce financial statements faster and be compatible with any software solutions the organization might want to add in the future.

#### Company Profile

West Acres Development is a shopping center development company that owns and operates a large, regional mall in Fargo, North Dakota and manages several other, smaller properties that operate as separate companies.

#### Benefits

Microsoft SQL Server enables West Acres to quickly run financial statements—saving the organization time and making the accounting staffs' jobs less stressful. West Acres financial system is also more flexible since the software the company plans to add in the future is fine-tuned to run on Microsoft SQL Server.

#### Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains  
 Financials  
 Customization Tools  
 Microsoft SQL Server™  
 Microsoft Windows® Server 2000

#### Demographic Information

Number of Employees: 50  
 Number of Users: 4

#### Migrated from FairCom c-tree database

*Longtime Microsoft Business Solutions customer West Acres Development enjoyed the features and business benefits of their business management system but desired the ability to produce reports more quickly and keep the system flexible for the future. By implementing Microsoft SQL Server, the company vastly increased reporting speed and now has the flexibility to easily expand with third-party add-on products as the business grows.*

West Acres Development, LLP owns and/or operates several properties in Fargo, North Dakota. Their flagship property is West Acres Shopping Center, which is the largest shopping mall in the state with more than 120 retail stores. In addition to the mall operations, the company manages The West Acres Merchants Association, the advertising arm of the mall, governed by a separate, merchant-led board of directors. Four additional sets of financial records are kept for other smaller partnerships.

### A Strong Belief in Microsoft Business Solutions

West Acres has a long history of loyalty and confidence in Microsoft Business Solutions products, beginning in 1983 by being the first MS-DOS® beta test site for the legacy accounting solution.

The company successfully utilized FairCom c-tree as their database for several years, but as the organization grew and their accounting and reporting needs expanded, c-tree lacked the speed West Acres needed.

The organization manages six different companies, each with its own database. Luann Berg, West Acres accountant, says it took as much as four hours to run six financial statements for one of the companies. West Acres Chief Executive Officer Brad Schlossman and controller Pat Gabriel attended Microsoft Business Solutions customer conference, Convergence, and determined that a switch to Microsoft SQL Server would not only help with the reporting speed, but also create a more flexible, expandable solution for the company.

### Immediate Results with Microsoft SQL Server

According to Berg, West Acres saw immediate results after installing Microsoft SQL Server. “The company that used to require four hours to produce financial statements now only needs four minutes and another company that needed an hour and a half only needs three minutes,” she says.

Schlossman says Explorer also shows increased speed with windows, populating in a matter of seconds instead of waiting several minutes.

*"The reports for West Acres went from four hours to produce to four minutes. It's unbelievable."*

Pat Gabriel  
Controller  
West Acres

The combination of Microsoft Windows Server 2000 and Microsoft SQL Server gives West Acres more confidence in their financial system. "There is a routine in Windows 2000 Server that makes three backups on the file server so if I can't restore from tape, I can go back three days on the file server and restore through Microsoft SQL," Gabriel says. "It's a big relief knowing that at least three days are backed up by Microsoft SQL Server."

## Planning for the Future

Schlossman says the company was also thinking about the future of the financial system when they decided to convert to Microsoft SQL Server. "A lot of the third-party solutions we saw at Convergence run on Microsoft SQL Server, so we thought that was another good reason for switching," he says.

Many software developers design products to integrate with Microsoft SQL Server because of its power and stability. By switching to Microsoft SQL Server, Schlossman and Gabriel are confident they will have a vast selection of software solutions to choose from that will work seamlessly with their existing system.

## Return on Investment

West Acres has realized many benefits since migrating their database from FairCom c-tree to Microsoft SQL Server, including:

- **Faster Reporting**—Microsoft SQL Server generates financial statements in minutes instead of hours. The accounting staff previously needed as much as four hours to produce reports for one company. Microsoft Business Solutions now generates those same reports in four minutes.
- **Increased Speed**—West Acres utilizes one database for each of their companies. Switching between those companies is much faster in Microsoft Business Solutions.
- **Flexibility**—Microsoft SQL Server is the database solution of choice for many software developers, so West Acres can be sure it will be easy to add more software to their system in the future.
- **Improved Morale**—Microsoft SQL Server provides a faster, more stable platform that proves to be less frustrating for users which, in turn, increases employee morale.

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit [www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions](http://www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions)

© 2002 Microsoft Corp. All rights reserved. Microsoft and Great Plains are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation or Great Plains Software, Inc., in the United States and/or other countries. Great Plains Software, Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

This document is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT BUSINESS SOLUTIONS MAKES NO WARRANTIES,