

CASE STUDY

Virginia Department of Forestry's "Buy Virginia Trees" E-commerce Site

With help from website developer AIS Network, the state agency that has grown seedlings for Virginia landowners for more than 100 years has relaunched its online store, www.buyvatrees.com. Featuring digital design best practices, enhanced functionality and security, and a fresh new look, VDOF's store is a key component in fulfilling their mission to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.

Client

The Virginia Department of Forestry sells nearly 70 species of bare-root seedlings to citizens who want to repopulate forests and wildlife habitats, stabilize stream banks, plant urban forests, establish timber stands or pulpwood crops, grow Christmas trees or simply beautify Virginia lands.

Challenge

VDOF's online store was outdated and inefficient, which hampered citizen engagement and staff oversight. The order-to-delivery process was clumsy, and the site lacked key compliance and security features. To grow online sales and better serve customers, VDOF required a more robust site with improved inventory control, payment processing and back office integration.

Solution

Using a combination of best practices for technical architecture and business process, AISN delivered a multifunctional, easily navigated site that is visibly pleasing, engages customers and transforms the order-to-delivery process. AISN provided project management, design and development, user acceptance testing and Virginia Information Security Standards adherence. AISN also built in an inventory control mechanism, PCI-compliant credit card processing, integration with the agency's QuickBooks environment and improved access to data for VDOF nurseries and staff.

Results

Hosted and supported by AISN, VDOF's more robust online store significantly improves customer and staff engagement, data management and transaction security. A user-friendly WordPress CMS enables easy content and business line updates. Tighter back-end integration means nurseries and staff can make better decisions with access to more timely data and improved financial reporting. Five years since its debut, the store now sells 28 million seedlings annually and has demonstrated its capability to adapt and thrive amidst varying market conditions, setting a solid foundation for continued growth in the years ahead.

