



The Latimore Company, LLC

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November 16, 2023

### Permit Process Review Kitsap County Department of Community Development

Mr. Glen McNeill, Purchasing Program Supervisor  
Kitsap County  
614 Division Street MS-7  
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Dear Mr. McNeill and the Kitsap County Community Development Team:

The Latimore Company, LLC offers this proposal to produce the 2023-051 PERMIT PROCESS CONSULTANT REVIEW SERVICES assessment and improvement recommendations.

Kurt Latimore, founder and managing member of The Latimore Company, LLC, is authorized to bind the firm contractually and perform these services for Kitsap County.

#### Proposer's Contact Information

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Thank you for this opportunity. Our results will be powerful, specific to the needs of Kitsap County applicants and department personnel, prioritized, and readily actionable.

Regards,

Kurt Latimore, Member  
The Latimore Company, LLC

Page 1 of 11

# Executive Summary

The Latimore Company, LLC (TLC) is the premier consulting practice in the State that specializes in bringing predictability, timeliness, efficiency, and collaboration to our development review offices.

TLC has served 23 Washington State counties and cities since its launch over 20 years ago and is the author of the benchmark “Best Practices for Local Government Permitting” for the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance.

The firm’s principal, Kurt Latimore, is an experienced process analyst, systems engineer, and management consultant. Kurt, a professional engineer and process improvement specialist for over 25 years in the diverse fields of land use and permitting, aerospace, software, and communications, applies proven methods such as Lean, the Theory of Constraints, Organizational Change Management, Workflow Modeling, and Multiple Stakeholder Facilitation.

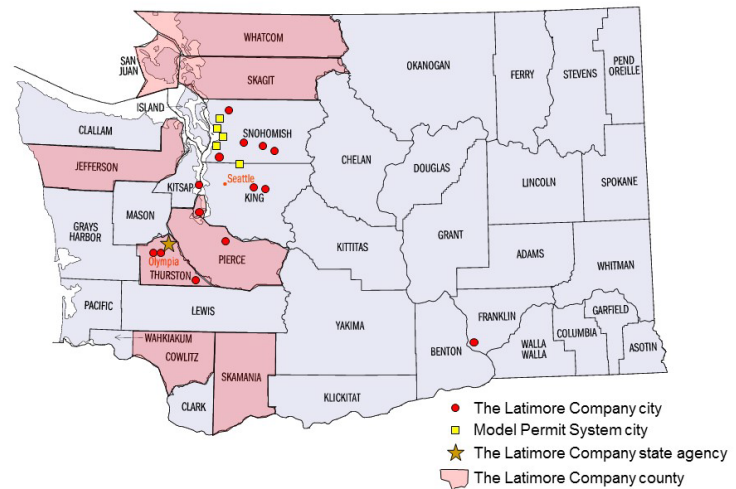
Kurt brings these methodologies to life with outstanding communication and team-building skills. He fully engages the organization and its customers, identifies unique strengths and opportunities, and guides the team all the way to the finish line with robust implementation of improvements. He is a frequent conference and continuing education speaker on best practices.

## Summary of Approach and Methodology

The effort begins with level-setting sessions with department leaders to learn aspirations for the effort, forecasts, what runs well, where we struggle; how the pandemic, attrition, and rising volumes have affected operations; and to finalize our scope and team engagement plan. This is followed by an all-hands kickoff meeting to explain the effort, how each will be involved, how it will feel alongside ongoing workload, and to answer questions.

From there we launch into tracing how common Title 14 and 21 applications originate, how they’re taken in, routed and synced with related reviews and with other agencies, how queues are prioritized, and how review is conducted and decided. These are captured in in-person group/small group sessions, progressing to one-on-ones in person and online, validated through subsequent team reviews. Deep cross-sections of the team participate, often everyone in the department participates in at least one session.

Washington State Government Service Clients



TLC will be looking through the lens of widely embraced best practices developed by TLC for the Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance:

1. Establish mutual understanding
2. Engage stakeholders early
3. Ensure complete applications
4. Understand your process and fees
5. Use information technology
6. Utilize flexible staffing strategies
7. Internal project management

We match this up with data. The department has a sophisticated lean methodology in place. We would survey what is collected, what it tells us, and what we'd add to give us the view on performance we're seeking. Most of the time in a typical permitting process is spent:

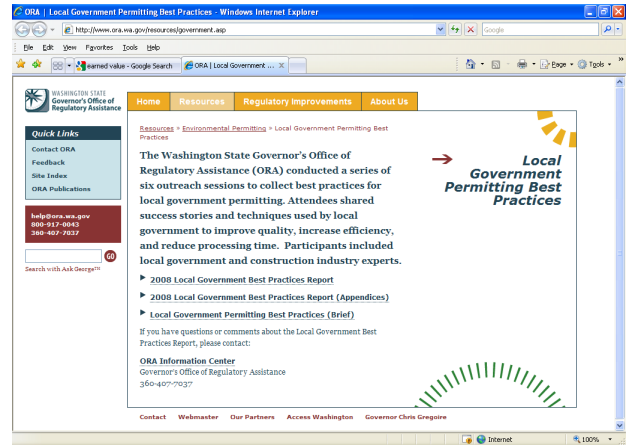
- Developing the submittal materials (drawings, studies, engineering, etc.)
- Waiting in queues for review
- Iterating through resubmittals. This is the big time-burner: retracing these steps each time.

Meanwhile, a sample of applicants are asked their impressions of the county process: what works well, where we struggle, and what success looks like. This would include a meeting with an industry group, such as the Kitsap Building Association, and the RFP-envisioned group session to hear perspectives from frequent applicants as well as those new to the sophistication of development review. Follow-on online sessions typically occur for participant convenience and to deep dive select examples.

This staff input, workflow, metrics, forecasts, and applicant feedback is analyzed, the constraint pacing departmental review (and the forces driving it) is identified, and improvement recommendations formulated. Here, the best practices are combined with the full breadth of TLC experience with local jurisdictions and proven solutions, to reveal recommendations specific to the needs of Kitsap County, cognizant of our unique home rule, environmental, shoreline, and growth management systems in Washington.

This report of findings and recommendations is presented to the team and the Commissioners, showing the path forward to the goals and building momentum.

From there, an implementation plan is developed, tuning the effort to achieve results promptly while continuing to fulfil daily development reviews for county applicants. The effort will be guided forward and coached through the challenges of organizational change toward the future enabled by this initiative.



## **Work Plan (Tasks 100, 200 and 300)**

Kurt will conduct this assessment (Task 100), produce and present the report (Task 200), and put the recommendations into motion (Task 300). No subconsultants are proposed.

### ***Task 100 – Data Collection and Interviews***

TLC will complete all tasks listed in the RFP for this task.

We start with the scoping discussion with the Director and Assistant Director.

We'll include in the discussion:

- Goals for the department
- Current strengths and struggles
- A read on current results:
  - Quality of submittals and reviews
  - Budget vs. Actuals
  - Delivery, timelines
  - Safety, lost workdays, travel demands
  - Morale throughout the department
- Changes since 2017-2018
- Effect of attrition and subsequent learning curves
- Open/closed hours
- What the community needs of us and what we need of it

These questions are then posed to the broader leadership team for their perspectives.

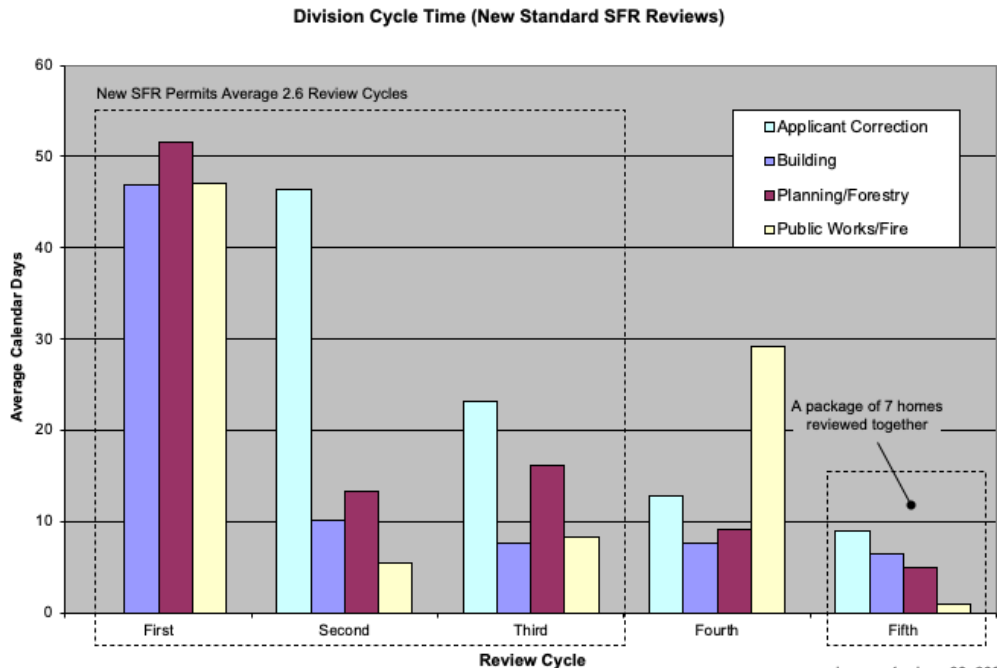
This is followed by an all-hands kickoff meeting to explain the effort and how each will be involved, how it will feel alongside ongoing workload, and to answer questions. This is an important step to engage the team in the effort and alleviate any staff concerns.

The next focus is Operations and Data Analytics.

We will review the existing lean objectives, approach, and the DMAIC efforts underway, along with the current analytics inventory. These factors, among others, will be explored:

- Volumes
- Timelines
- Timeline targets
- Resubmittal rates
- Reviewer queue cycle times
- How data is used and its effect
- Known hot spots.

We'd put into motion any new measurements or calculations needed to inform the effort.



**Figure 1 - Sample Data Analysis**

Next, TLC interviews the intake team. These topics will be explored, along with areas the team identifies for focus:

- Counter inquiries
- Online materials and tools
- Completeness determination
- Appointments, online submittal options, and counter submittals
- Cashiering
- Other duties, how time is apportioned
- Title 14 vs Title 21 practices
- Noticing
- Permit system administration, template/workflow ownership
- Effectiveness of the current tracking system and the effort required to keep it current
- Online status effectiveness and status inquiries

We'd expect at least one follow-on to read back the first session and garner feedback on various approaches we could use to make the process run smoother on both sides of the counter.

Alongside the intake team interviews, we'd conduct the review team interviews.

These begin with in-person group/small group sessions, progressing to select one-on-ones in person or online, with learnings and ideas presented back to the team for validation and to surface finer points. A few passes are needed here as reflection of the initial conversation and its read-back typically reveals important nuances. Deep cross-sections of the team participate, often everyone in the department participates in at least one session.

Topics include:

- Topics the team wants to focus on
- Tracking system use/usefulness
- Queue size and deciding what to work on next
- Review timelines
- Completeness quality
- Use of checklists
- Resubmittal practices
  - One department comment letter or letters from each reviewer
  - Are resubmittals vetted at submittal
  - How do we decide who to route resubmittals to for review.
- Other duties (counter, inquiries, pre-apps, inspections, other)
- Capacity/workload, multitasking
- Effect of vacancies and training new people
- Effectiveness of current engineering/development/road, etc., standards
- Anticipated building code update effects
- What applicants ought to be like
- What success looks like.

Meanwhile, TLC reaches out to the public, interviewing a sample of applicants for their impressions of the county process:

- What works well and where we struggle
- Are pre-application, online, and other county resources easy to find and use, and can they rely on them
- How challenging is it to keep everyone on the same page (applicant, consultants, reviewers, and the various project applications)
- Is there adequate consultant capacity in the area
- What the county team ought to be like
- What success looks like.

TLC would host and facilitate an in-person group session for the public and an online session for participant convenience. In the public session we want to hear from frequent applicants as well as those new to the sophistication of development review. Online follow-ons typically deep-dive select examples.

TLC would also conduct a meeting with an industry group, such as the Kitsap Building Association, to learn their perspective, needs of the department, and construction forecast.

This would also include outreach to other agencies for their feedback, such as Kitsap Public Health, Kitsap PUD, cities (UGA processes), WDFW, etc.

Throughout these interviews, we will be looking through the lens of best practices published the TLC for the state:

- Establish mutual understanding
  - Online references, maps, procedures, current timelines
  - Counter references
  - Pre-dev/pre-app options
  - Scheduled inquiries, counter inquiries
- Early stakeholder engagement
  - Other agencies (WDFW, Kitsap Public Health District, etc.)
  - Understanding the critical area and drainage needs of a site early
- Complete application
  - Checklists with appropriate content to minimize resubmittals later
  - Intake rigor and cure of omissions before routing
  - Determination of completeness method and timing
    - Title 14 – automatically on Day 28? At intake?
    - Title 21 – for land use actions, SEPA, and how for subsequent civils, etc.
- Know process and fees
  - What is the workflow? How are priorities determined?
  - Interruption rate, availability of focused time for review
  - Fee calculation effort and accuracy
  - What internal mechanisms are used to align/integrate reviewer comments and conditions
- Use information technology
  - Online meetings
  - Online submittal/staff review comments/resubmittal (and clouding)
  - Intermix of paper submittals/materials in the process
  - Public notices and public comment
  - Fee payments
  - Inspection requests and correction notices
- Flexible staffing strategy
  - Current team makeup (planners, plans examiners, inspectors, engineers, technicians, etc.)
  - On staff specialists (hydrogeologists, geotechnical, natural resources, etc.)
  - Outside/on-call plan review options (overflow or specialty)
  - Interlocal agreements
  - Reserve fund
- Project managers
  - How is the cohesiveness and timeliness of a project review maintained
  - How do applicants and the public determine status

## Task 200 Report and Presentations

This task analyzes the process, finds the constraint, and reports findings and recommendations. All tasks listed in the RFP will be performed.

### Analysis

TLC melds interview results, data measurements, and observations to derive findings and recommendations. Reports are rich in content, easy to read, clearly shine light on why things are, and show the path forward (Fig. 2). Recommendations are specific to the unique needs of Kitsap County, draw on a deep library of proven TLC solutions, and offer new innovations.

The analysis compares the current architecture of the process with its current performance measures. Applying the Theory of Constraints, this reveals the constraint that paces overall department results. Targeting our improvements on the constraint improves the whole.

The current constraint is one review point/team/dept/step that has lower throughput than all the others. This is often driven by rework (high resubmittal counts), high multitasking (fragmenting review periods), or local features (like particularly challenging water, soils, or critical areas prevalent in local applications) in addition to volume and staffing level/vacancies.

TLC finds the constraint and explains what's driving it. Recommendations address the constraint as a priority. Further recommendations are prioritized based on anticipated benefits to the organization and applicants.

### Report

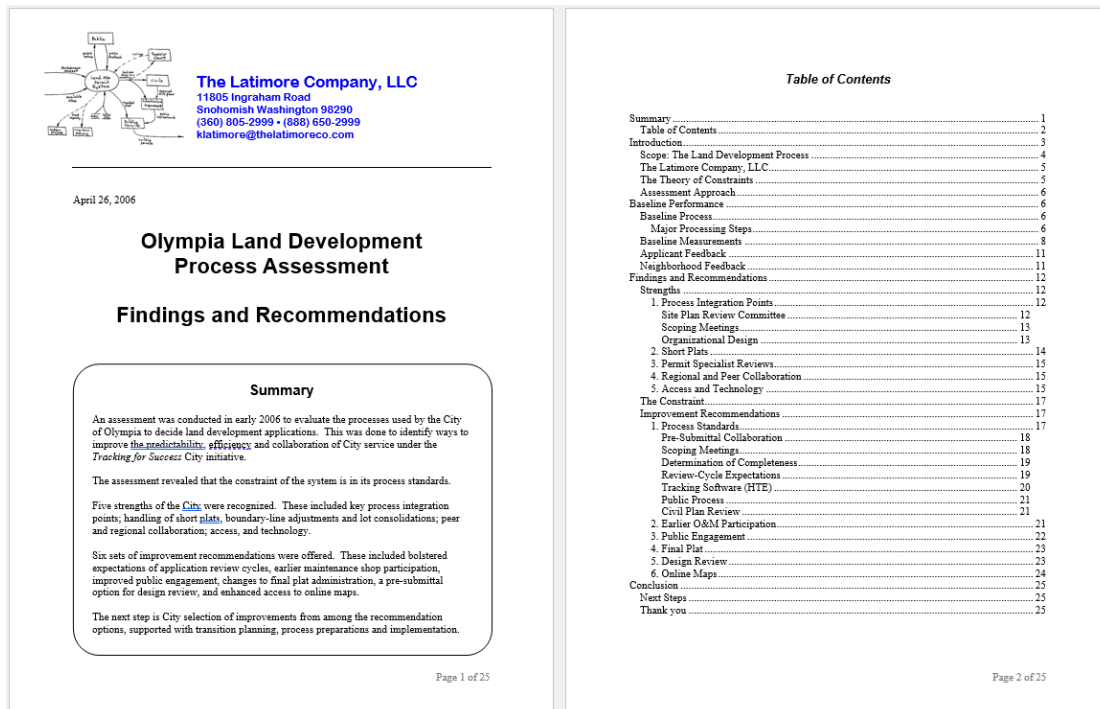


Figure 2 - Sample Report Excerpt



The report chronicles:

- What we did
- How applications flow through the process
- Current performance metrics (from existing analytics plus any we added)
- Key messages from applicants, agencies, and department staff
- Strengths in the department, key features we want to retain as we improve other areas
- Opportunities for improvement
- Where the constraint is and why
- Broader findings and observations
- Recommendations
- Conclusions
- Next steps to begin implementation.

The report serves as an ongoing reference as well.

### **Presentations**

A preview of the report will be presented to department leadership. Thereafter we would present it to the department team in an all-hands session, like the kickoff, to explain its findings, recommendations, gauge feedback, and answer any questions. This all-hands session is important to build momentum for the upcoming implementation efforts.

A presentation to the Commissioners in a working session would occur next.

### ***Task 300 – Implementation Assistance***

After the report, TLC will develop an implementation plan, working with leadership to tune its pace to achieve results promptly while continuing to fulfil daily development reviews for county applicants.

TLC is very experienced in organizational change management. The nature of our work together, from initial kickoff, through the details, to resulting recommendations is designed to foster teamwork. It's important that department staff are part of the improvement process, that it's not something done from outside. The implementation phase is where this really shines as the team who's been integral all the way through jump in together to make it happen.

This includes an implementation schedule, based on priority (like Fig. 3).

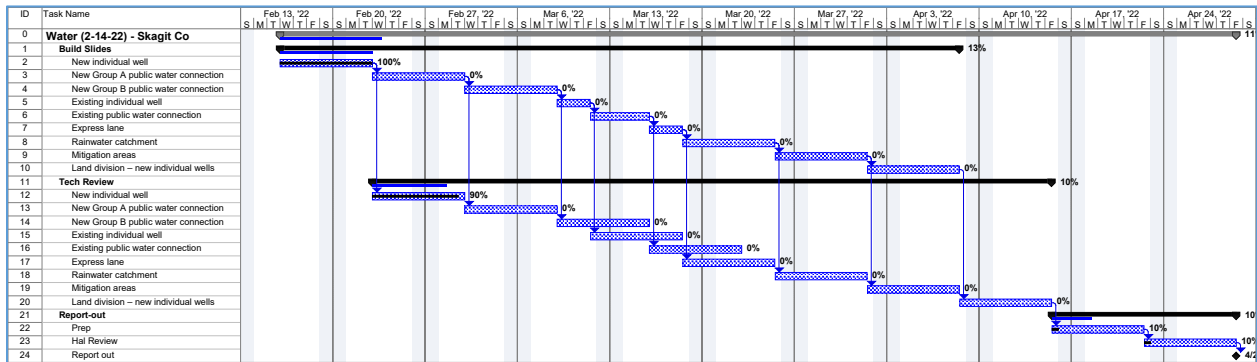


Figure 3 - Sample Implementation Schedule

Then, TLC coaches and guides the team through the implementation launch to establish the effort alongside daily development review, gain initial traction, and clear any obstacles.

Building Permit Applications - Oldest Unreviewed Project  
(updated 11/24/21)

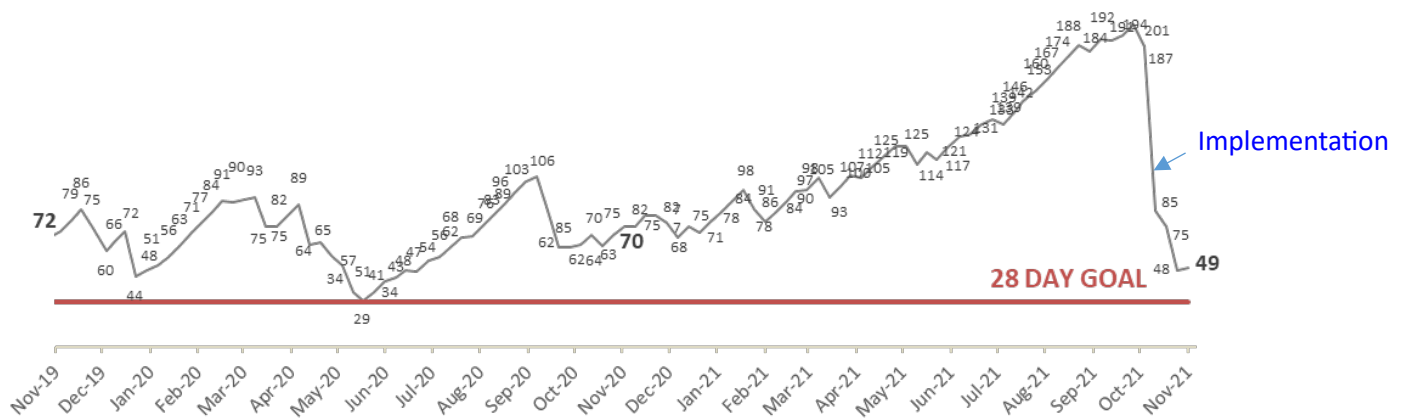


Figure 4 - Measuring Implementation Success

# Initiative Schedule

The proposed initiative schedule is shown below (Fig. 5). The effort will begin without delay.

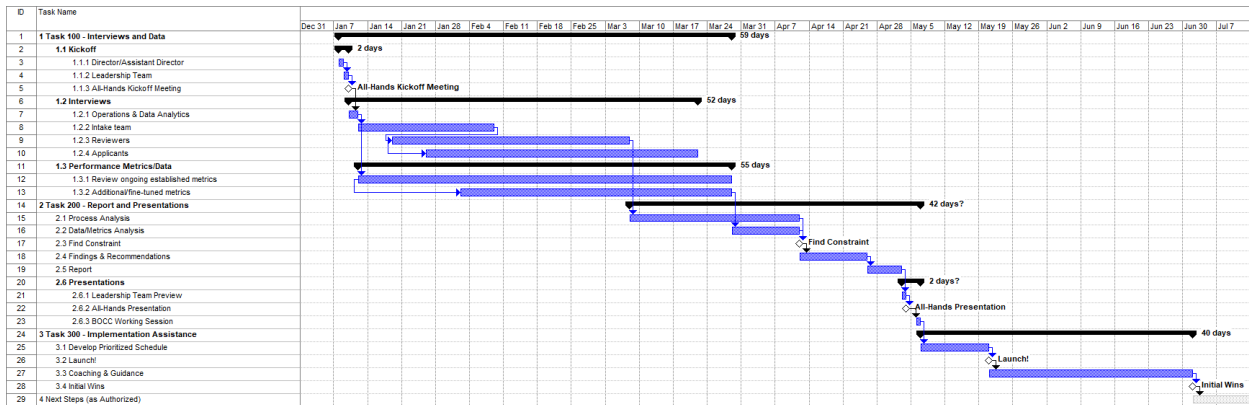


Figure 5 - Initiative Schedule

# Cost Proposal

TLC offers this cost proposal for the effort (Fig. 6).

Task	Description	Hours	Price
100	Interviews & Data Collection	80	\$ 18,000
200	Report & Presentation	80	\$ 18,000
300	Implementation Guidance	100	\$ 22,500
	Total	260	\$ 58,500
	Hourly Rate		\$ 225

Figure 6 - Cost Proposal

# Next Steps

TLC is here to the finish line. We recommend sustaining the team through full implementation, establishing these improvements firmly into the process. This also strengthens the skill sets within the department for ongoing DMAIC efforts.

# Thank You

Thank you for this opportunity to work together to assess the Kitsap County Department of Community Development process and improve the daily experience of our applicants and department teammates.

Regards, *Kurt R. Latimore*

Kurt Latimore, Member  
The Latimore Company, LLC