



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

Study Session

Item -1

Presentation of Web Site Conversion

Over the past year the city undertook measures to increase communication and responsiveness to residents through expanded use of technology. Specifically the Grand Island City Council approved a partnership with Vision Internet for the redevelopment of the City's website, grand-island.com. Known in the industry as the Government Website Experts, Vision Internet exceeded their reputation providing superior support and guidance throughout the duration of the project. This support coupled with the background knowledge and hard work of the Grand Island staff has made for an outstanding collaboration. In the not too distant future, residents and staff members alike will experience the benefits of this hard work. The City's new website will officially be unveiled and launched at the next City Council meeting held on November 3.

The implementation of Vision's Content Management System streamlines the City's internal updating process. The system is extremely user friendly, allowing both technical and non-technical savvy staff members to make updates. Through training provided by Vision Internet and the Website Rebuild Committee, approximately 50 staff members can now create and take ownership of their specific department's web content instead of just three employees who previously were in charge of website maintenance. Decentralizing the updating tasks will lighten individual staff members' work load. For website visitors this means more information that is timely and accurate on a more frequent basis.

The new site also offers many new dynamic and interactive features that the old site did not have the capabilities of. Examples include: an e-notification tool, ability to produce forms and surveys that citizens can now submit online, online polling, an "In the Spotlight" featured area on the front page, Emergency Notification that can be showcased on the front page when needed, a Document Central location, and a city-all calendar that offers different search options according to departments and categories.

One of the great features of the Vision Content Management System is that it also allows for the future scheduling of content publications and provides an automatic expiration feature. Visitors can trust that what they are reading is accurate.

Several third party vendors have also been easily incorporated into the new look of the site. The Citizen Request Management System allows City officials to better analyze needs and trends while increasing the amount of work accomplished by staff. The system includes numerous features, including automatic reports describing the status of citizen requests, customer satisfaction surveys, and follow-up communications to citizens offering superior customer service and responsiveness. The Grand Island Video TourBook is also a new

feature that has 10 various videos that showcase the Grand Island community. The Human Resources Department, as well as the Police Department, both have interactive new tools in place on the website to help better meet the needs of residents.

Throughout the last eight months the Website Rebuild Committee has strived to create a site that had a primary focus on municipality services, resources, and activities, but also felt it was important to have a well-rounded site that encompassed several different entities in the community. The new navigation headers “I Want To,” “Residents,” and “Business,” all offer links and information on an assortment of community resources that citizens and visitors will find extremely helpful.

The overall look and feel of the website’s design has also seen a dramatic change. A great deal of thought and time was put into the new design. Images of the community have been updated and a more intuitive navigational map has been put in place. The designers and staff members have worked hard to keep the website in sync with the City’s vision of becoming easier to access and to become more interactive with citizens; all while keeping in mind to reflect what is unique to Grand Island. With easily-accessible online services, timely information updates and a fresh, vibrant design, the new site is one of the city’s newest efforts in being responsive to the community needs.

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