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City of Longmont
Case Study

Website Overhaul Boosts Citizen Engagement to 80% in Longmont, Colorado

In an age when technology changes in an instant, Longmont, Colorado's 17-year-old original website was "prehistoric," according to the City's Public Information Officer Rigo Leal. By 2014, the online gateway to the City was out of sync with its tech-savvy population and reputation for having one of the highest concentrations of software-related jobs in the nation.

"The site did not reflect Longmont's vibrant, multicultural community or our position in the state's high tech corridor," said City Manager Harold Dominguez. "It gave the impression that our city was behind the technology curve."

"Longmont residents are very tech savvy and expect the latest features from websites, especially from their local government website," added Leal. "They also take pride in the City's natural beauty and spectacular Rocky Mountain vista, to which our former site did not do justice. We would have failed them had we not upgraded."

Longmont's website planning team recognized that after years of adding more and more information to its original site, it had become a "gigantic encyclopedia of information." They set their sights on a new portal with easy navigation, clean responsive design and the ability to integrate visual elements that would show off Longmont's beauty and activities.

After a thorough search for the most advanced programming available, Longmont chose Vision to develop its new website.

Prior to launch, Vision Internet worked with Longmont to conduct user testing with 30 people representing the diverse demographics of the City. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive including many comments on the new site's ease of navigation, eye-popping graphic design and useful calendar options.

"The site's responsive design is a quantum leap forward from the old site," said Leal. "The ability of the new site to resize and reconfigure for optimal viewing on a desktop, laptop, iPad or smartphone has been a huge plus. From a resident's perspective, it's an easy to use, optimized experience; from a content manager's view, it means developing and maintaining just one site for all devices instead of creating several unique web pages."

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> **Rigo Leal**
> Public Information Officer
> City of Longmont

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Vision's advanced content management system gives the Longmont team greater access, functionality, flexibility and creative license. The ease of updating site content opened the door to more internal editors and more autonomy for each.

One year after the website overhaul, the City of Longmont reported a 10 percent increase in site visitors. According to Longmont's biannual citizen survey, 80 percent of residents now interact with the city online at its simplified domain name of longmontcolorado.gov.

Visitors to the city's calendar of events page also increased dramatically in the first year. The new calendar now is one of the most popular pages on the website. Content managers keep the information current and filtering options let visitors find specific events with a couple of clicks.

"People now trust that the information is current and accurate," Leal said.

The site's e-Notification feature and self-serve "I Want To" section are extremely popular, linking people to online services that range from applying for city jobs and scheduling building inspections to booking tee times or reserving event space at city parks.

Connectivity between the website and social media also has enhanced the city's ability to communicate with residents. "We can post news items and updates to our website instantly from any device," said Leal. "And what we post on the website instantly feeds to our Twitter and Facebook pages."

With the success of its new website, the city also asked Vision Internet to revamp its Intranet site, which launched in September of 2015. Similar in design to the external site, the new Intranet has a homepage calendar with employee events, the latest internal news and links to high-demand information like employee benefits. City employees and council members can access the Intranet remotely via a password-protected portal on the main external site.

Like many of the best municipal websites, the Longmont site remains in a perpetual state of self-improvement. Plans for the future include adding rotation to a box on the homepage called "In the Spotlight" to showcase a variety of topics.

Thanks to a great deal of hard work and its partnership with Vision, Longmont's digital footprint now accurately and positively represents the unique cultural and economic personality of the community. The homepage design, which graphically changes with each new site visit, is a proud representation of Longmont's beautiful, innovative and engaging community.