

# Case Study

## City of Smithville, Texas

[www.ci.smithville.tx.us](http://www.ci.smithville.tx.us)



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## Goals

For years the City of Smithville only had a single web page that rarely got updated. It was the desire of the City of Smithville to develop a comprehensive web site that would better serve the residents of Smithville. It would also be a requirement that the site could be updated and maintained by City of Smithville staff. To this end our first step was to send out a survey in the City of Smithville Utility bills, which was also published online on the LiveAir web site using a BizForm (LiveAir's site is also on Kentico). In the survey we asked citizens which features they would most like to see on the City web site. The results of the completed and returned surveys were compiled and the top requested features were cataloged and prioritized. Due to budget and logistical restraints some features would be implemented right away and others would be added later. This introduced the requirement for a flexible platform that could be extended into the future.

Among the requested features to be implemented right away were:

- a) Online Utility Payment
- b) City Council Agendas/Past Minutes
- c) Regularly updated events calendar
- d) Recreation Center programs and schedules
- e) City Job Listings
- f) Information on City services and ordinances
- g) City Newsletter with on-site subscription

Many of the requests regarded user friendliness issues, such as ease of navigation and a site map, easy readability, and quick loading pages. All of these were naturally designed in to the site.

A town hall meeting was held for live discussion with City Residents on the planning for the web site and meetings were also held with various City Staff Members to incorporate their needs and ideas in to the planning of the web site.

Additional features that were added to the list were:

- Information and contacts for the various City Departments available on the front page and with most departments having their own section on the site
- Geo-mapping to various City Facilities and Park Locations
- Close Patrol Request for the City of Smithville Police Department
- A page with information on and links to the City of Smithville Public Library web site
- The ability for the City Grant administrator to create polls and use the data from the polls in grant applications and follow-up
- Listing of Open Warrants from the Municipal Court
- City News and Alerts

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*“The site looks great. The training was good and the on-going support has been fantastic. Basically the site was there one day and I started using it.*

*My goal was to encourage more public participation in City projects. Ideally this means getting the word out on a lot of projects to as many residents of the community as quickly as possible. Town Hall meetings just don't work that well anymore and people in general are getting more and more of their information from the internet. With the website we have several ways to quickly and easily get information out including a blog, news articles and Newsletters. Getting information out to people wanting it in a timely manner is important. Now I am able to do this in less time and spend more time actually managing my projects.*

*Using the BizForms module to create surveys to gather data for grant activities has been invaluable. On one project, the Safe Routes to School Project, the survey data was integral in actually getting the grant – without that data I'm sure we would have been less competitive.”*

**Jill Strube,**  
City of Smithville,  
Grants Administrator

Most of the features requested were available to be implemented using Kentico out of the box standard features. The site was originally implemented in version 4.1 and later upgraded to version 5.5. The overall challenge in developing this web site was inform citizens of Smithville, new residents and visitors to Smithville of City Services and activities and to help provide better service.

## Challenges and Solutions

**Challenge:** An important challenge in planning this site was to configure each of the functions to be easily edited by and managed City personnel inside the Kentico CMS desk interface.

**Solution:** Careful planning of the use and configuration of web parts and document types reduced the time spent training City of Smithville staff to work with the web site. An experienced Kentico Partner, S7 Media Design was able to quickly and easily accomplish this based on information gathered in meetings with City Employees and S7's past experiences configuring Kentico for end users. A group of City Employees were trained on the site in a single morning session. A handful of 1 hour follow ups with individual employees completed the training. For the most part the employees have managed the site on their own, with minimal support from S7 Media Design. Whenever an issue arises it is usually a simple matter to refresh the employee on some aspect of the web site. Refinements to the interface are easily and quickly done, especially since upgrading to version 5.5. Never has an issue remained open for more than 24 hours.

For configuring features to be easily managed from the CMS Desk interface a good example is the custom news slider on the front page. This is a prominently featured slider that presents the latest City of Smithville news teaser with a photograph using the native CMS.Article document type, a repeater and a bit of custom javascript. The end product is a custom news slider that is easily updated using the form on the CMS desk.

Another example was creating a custom document type for Open Warrants from the Municipal Court and displaying them with a query data grid web part. In this way they were easily entered and are easily updated from the CMS desk interface by simply filling out the form.



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*“On another grant having the ability to include web surveys as part of our working plan has helped make the application more competitive.*

*This tool is also something that has helped increase people’s feelings of being involved in the process and helping make decisions that enhance the quality of life here in Smithville. Having this tool available has made these activities more efficient and overall made a decisive difference on these projects.”*

**Jill Strube,**  
City of Smithville,  
Grants Administrator

**Challenge:** Configuring utility payments for online payment through Authorize.net. We had very specific parameters in the scope for this including the customer inputting their account number and the amount of payment.

**Solution:** S7 Media Design and LiveAir worked with Authorize.net to develop a custom form control that would allow utility payments to be done properly online from the City web site. Even though the site is developed using the portal engine we were able to incorporate an aspx template for this payment page demonstrating the flexibility of the Kentico platform.

**Challenge:** With several City Employees updating and adding to the website a measure of accountability and control had to be introduced.

**Solution:** For this the Kentico workflow feature worked perfectly. The City Manager is able to review each addition before approving it for publication.

**Challenge:** To encourage more public participation in City projects. Ideally this means getting the word out on a lot of projects to as many residents of the community as quickly as possible.

**Solution:** The new web site has multiple tools available for this including; A City Calendar which posts announcements of events and activities, City Blog which is also a good source of information for visitors to Smithville, and an Alert and Bulletins Box on the front page of the website. Each department has their own section with general information which is kept up to date. One Smithville project, Safe Routes to School is also on Facebook and Twitter and Facebook integration has been included on the blog pages.

**Challenge:** Gathering data from area residents for use in grant applications.

**Solution:** Using the BizForms module to create online survey forms and the City Blog to inform residents of the survey the City Grant Manager was able to effectively collect useful data for grant activities. On one project, the Safe Routes to School Project, the survey data was integral in actually getting the grant – without that data it would have been less competitive. On another grant having the ability to include web surveys as part of the working plan has helped make the application more competitive.



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*“Having the Open Warrants listing on the website and keeping it up to date has increased our revenue 25% - 30% a month.”*

**Ronald Jones,**  
City of Smithville,  
Municipal Judge

## Key criteria for selecting Kentico CMS

1. A large number of the needed features were immediately available as standard web parts and modules in the Kentico CMS.
2. Using licensed software from Kentico and using a certified Kentico partner who is also a hosting partner for development and hosting ongoing support and security is assured.
3. Special Features were easily provided with minimal development time. Kentico overall facilitated rapid development on this site, helping keep costs reasonable. From design to finished web site was less than 120 days. The City Manager was amazed when we informed him it was ready to go live.
4. Ongoing development would be easy to do in the future and updates and new versions of Kentico continually expand the possibilities and usefulness of this website.
5. The security and stability of the ASP.NET platform and the maturity of Kentico CMS as an application.

