

Kansas' Capital City, Topeka, Automates Weekly Meeting Agenda, Simplifying Workload and Providing Online Access to Public Citizens

Creating a meeting agenda may not seem like that large of a task. However, when you are the capital city of the State of Kansas serving 125,000 citizens, a 9-member City Council, the City Clerk's office, and receiving agenda items from up to 30 City Departments and Divisions, putting together a meeting agenda becomes a monumental task by anyone's standards.

Since the Council meetings are held weekly, open to the public, and broadcast over the Internet, this monumental task is further complicated by the need for accurate agenda information.

That is exactly why the city of Topeka turned to Novusolutions and their agenda automation product, NovusAGENDA.

The Challenge

The old way of doing things simply wasn't working for the City of Topeka. The common process of submitting agenda items in paper form allowed people to submit agenda items late and in an unprofessional format.

"Thanks to Novusolutions, our old system has gone by the wayside and the City of Topeka has successfully moved into the electronic age and streamlined the agenda process," said Bill Stephens, Manager of Electronic Communications for the City of Topeka.

The Solution

Novusolutions was selected through a typical government open bid or Request for Proposal (RFP). Only three candidates met Topeka's selection criteria and made the short list.

"Novusolutions' NovusAGENDA stood out head and shoulders above the others when they came to demo the product," said Stephens. "They weren't the cheapest, but they had the right product for what we needed and wanted. We have used NovusAGENDA for two years and I have not heard a discouraging word except for the handful of individuals who do not follow the process or care about meeting the agenda deadline."

Not only does NovusAGENDA simplify and automate the process. It's easy to use.

“The system is very intuitive. It’s the best system that exists and will be until something is created that accepts voice entry,” laughed Stephens.

NovusAGENDA also allows a seamless transition in that the forms are branded to match the City’s image.

“We wanted something in which we could incorporate our City seal so brand configuration was critical in our decision making process,” explained Stephens. “Novusolutions worked with us so that everything – headers, background, font size, and type style are the same as the previous forms.”

The Results

Today, NovusAGENDA allows the City of Topeka’s agenda preparation process to be completely automated. Automation has reduced the time required by the City Clerk’s office to create a weekly agenda by 50 percent and allowed access for Council members and citizens with a simple click of the mouse. The website receives more than 180,000 hits monthly and provides online access to documents that were otherwise not accessible electronically.

Stephens says that another top features is the searching capability which makes it easier for Council members to find information about specific topics. The Council member’s home page defaults to the current agenda allowing them immediate access to the upcoming meeting.

Stephens also commented that technical support from Novusolutions has been quick and very helpful which eased the inevitable challenges that come with adopting a new system.

“From every perspective, we are extremely satisfied and without hesitation recommend NovusAGENDA to any City or County government,” said Stephens.