



News Release

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The City of DeSoto Information Technology Department Receives Digital Cities Award for Second Year In A Row

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For the second year in a row, DeSoto has won the prestigious Digital Cities Award for cities with a population under 75,000. This award is only given to ten cities across the nation in each population category by the Center for Digital Government (CDG).

“This is exciting news! Congratulations to the IT Department on again winning such a prestigious award,” said DeSoto Mayor Curtistene McCowan. “The City of DeSoto recognizes the importance of innovation in every aspect of how we conduct business in order to deliver more efficient and high quality service to our citizens.”

DeSoto earned this award in part for working to be a mobile-first community. For several years the city has prefaced any software or system purchase with the question, “Is it mobile-friendly?” As a result, nearly every department can boast of being as mobile as possible, for internal business as well as citizen services. During the last year these new projects have been implemented:

- A trash/recycling app was deployed, allowing residents to access their personalized pickup schedule, set reminders for themselves, and get information and tips about recycling.
- The Parks and Recreation Department offers mobile access to class schedules and the ability for citizens to enroll in classes via a mobile device.

- The Municipal Court also supports mobility, allowing for mobile payment of fines and offering "e-court," where defendants can meet with a judge via their mobile device without physically going to court.
- The court also texts reminders to defendants, including reminders of a due date for a payment plans, reminders for defendants who are three days out from a court date, and those whose cases are about to be issued a warrant.
- An Apple Volume Purchasing Program was added to the city's Enterprise Mobility Management system to help improve remote management of the city's mobile devices.

The city excels in sharing services with other local jurisdictions, collaborating on an animal shelter, 911 dispatch center and a jail. The city also shares employees, including the emergency management coordinator, who coordinates disaster preparation for four cities. During the last year, DeSoto's IT staff and fire department developed a simulated regional training program called Flame Sim. The program allows firefighters from three cities to train together and develop standardized operating procedures.

"This year's leading digital cities are leveraging technology to connect disadvantaged citizens with critical information and services, promote citizen inclusion in important government processes and share government data with the public," said Teri Takai, executive director of the Center for Digital Government. "Thanks to the efforts of these innovative cities, citizens can now meaningfully interact with city government more easily than in any other time in history. Congratulations to the winners!"

"Our IT Department has done an exemplary job of navigating the technological advancements in each unit and on a system-wide basis", said Mayor McCowan. "I commend them on their professionalism and expertise in providing the technical assistance to the city council, administration and staff, as we work together to raise the bar on performance internally and externally. Thank you, IT Department, on a job well done!"

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