

HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

Hernando County, Florida, Builds a Broadcast Presence

Hernando County, Florida, is the vibrant hub of Florida's Nature Coast, which is well-known for some of the best fishing, boating, birdwatching, canoeing and kayaking in the state. Hernando, along with Pasco, Hillsborough and Pinellas counties to the south, makes up the Tampa-St.Petersburg-Clearwater Metropolitan Statistical Area.

For Hernando County's Government Broadcasting, there was frustration over antiquated video systems and laborious processes that included putting meetings and events on VHS or DVD. Citizens were forced to fill out forms to request videotapes of meetings or shows. "It was an uphill battle. Citizens had to pay \$13 if they wanted a copy of a recording," says Rick Foti, Video Production Manager of Hernando County Government Broadcasting.

HOW ACCELA EMPOWERS HERNANDO COUNTY

The County looked for alternatives and ultimately determined that Accela Civic Streaming, part of the Accela Legislative Management suite, was easier to use and faster to implement. Once staff received their encoder and set it up to live-stream their media, the County was presented with a new realm of possibilities. In the first year alone, they recorded and uploaded about 290 shows, ranging from Board of County Commissioners' meetings to cooking shows and non-profit videos.

The on-demand media page attracted local and international viewers. Homeowners who summered in Hernando County were able to watch from their residences in Canada, allowing them to stay engaged even while far away from the meeting hall.

Clerks time-stamped the recordings, giving citizens the ability to skip through videos to the discussion of agenda items that mattered to them most. "Nothing makes me happier than to hear that someone went online and watched the video again – that's a tool people can use to get the point across and find out more information," says Foti. Additionally, informa-

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Population

170,000

Challenge

Streamline video capabilities, Create citizen-facing portal with access to view and download videos, Reduce costs of pricey video distribution

Solutions

Accela Agenda and Minutes, Accela Civic Streaming

Results

Recorded and uploaded over 290 videos in one year

Created Hernando County Media Center to offer citizens ability to search, view and download content

Reduced number of information requests

Cut costs of producing DVDs and VHS tapes



Keeping residents and the media informed with ease

tion requests decreased significantly when citizens were able to easily download and store videos on their home computers.

The solution enabled the creation of the Hernando County Media Center, which offers an alternative to hosting videos on YouTube. “The mind is a wandering thing,” Foti observed, referring to the related videos that often appear beside and after viewing media hosted by the video-sharing giant. Now, when citizens finish watching one Hernando County video, they find themselves back on the media center website, “opening the door for users to watch the other videos available on the portal.”

THE BOTTOM LINE

Accela Civic Streaming has enabled Hernando County to build out its broadcast presence by making it easier for citizens to view and download meetings and programming, while saving the agency time and money associated with rendering copies. Local newspapers don't send reporters to cover government meetings as they are able to access the media online from the comfort of their desks. And now, citizens can remain engaged regardless of location or time by participating in meetings remotely.

About Accela

Accela provides cloud-based productivity and civic engagement solutions to more than 2,200 government agencies worldwide. The Accela Civic Platform includes solutions for asset management, citizen relationship management, environmental health, finance and administration, land management, legislative management, licensing and case management, recreation and resource management, right of way management, and utility billing. More than fifty percent of America's largest cities use the Accela Civic Platform. The Company is headquartered in San Ramon, California, with offices in San Francisco, New York, Boston, Portland, Melbourne and Dubai.

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