

Project Profile – City of Surprise, Arizona



Background

Signs posted at the City of Surprise's borders say it all: "Population Increasing Daily." Located 20 miles northwest of downtown Phoenix, Surprise is experiencing a nearly 30-percent growth rate per year, earning it the title of Arizona's fastest growing city four out the past five years. It's estimated that its current population of about 60,000 could reach as high as 300,000 by 2020.

As a result, city leaders are taking a proactive approach to planning. Just approved by voters in March 2001, the City's updated general plan encompasses a 220-square-mile planning area. This roadmap to the future addresses such critical issues as open space, economic development, revitalization of the Original Townsite neighborhood, and mass transit needs. In addition, city leaders are establishing short, medium, and long-term goals to make Surprise a well-rounded community where residents love to live, work, and play.

Infrastructure

- 70 square miles
- 45,000 parcels
- 400 linear miles water distribution
- 250 linear miles wastewater collection

Project Description

In 1998, EMS was hired to completely design and develop the GIS for the City of Surprise. In addition to parcel, water, and sewer layers, EMS developed over 100 GIS layers for the City. As a result, Surprise now uses the EMS Utility Map Server to maintain the water, sewer and storm utility layers.

The City has also published books directly from EMSUS, as well as Shape Files for the server-based EMSFM Software distributed as a read-only viewing tool throughout the City. In addition, EMS used Visual Basic to create a Property Permitting System that ties into the GIS system to reduce errors in property management.

As a result of its GIS development, Surprise has significantly reduced processing errors when issuing permits and collecting fees. The City is expanding its program through further data distribution, custom programming, and migration from Access to SQL 7.0, all with the continued assistance and consultation of EMS.

In 2004, EMS delivered a custom ArcIMS application for city-wide intra-net data viewing. EMS is currently working on a web-based digital submittal process to be used by contractors to submit plans as well as check on existing permit status.

Contact Information

Lloyd Abrams, GIS Manager
City of Surprise
12425 W. Bell Road Suite B-203
Surprise, Arizona 85374
(602) 583-6025

Phil Ponce, P.E., Vice President
Engineering Mapping Solutions, Inc
2330 West Mission Lane, Suite 1
Phoenix, Arizona 85021
(602) 870-7811 ext. 14