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**New Orleans City Council Launches
[NOLA GOV. Online](http://NOLAGOV. Online) & NOLACityCouncil.com**

**First Municipal Government in Louisiana to Provide
Live & Archived Streaming Video
With Meetings Management Functionality**

Public Meetings and Emergency Information Online

September 2, 2009..... Today, the New Orleans City Council launched its redesigned website NOLACityCouncil.com and NOLA GOV. Online, a technology featuring live and archived streaming video of City Council meetings. NOLA GOV. Online can be accessed through the City Council website at www.nolacitycouncil.com.

Granicus, a San Francisco-based firm specializing in Internet Broadcasting and Archiving for local Government, answered a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the Council. The Council awarded Granicus and the firm's Louisiana partner, Crescent Communications, Inc., the contract on July 31, 2008. Although Granicus has more than 500 government clients, New Orleans is the first municipality in Louisiana to adopt this cutting-edge technology with meetings management functionality. This tool includes links within meeting agendas directing viewers to the Council's discussion on those items, as well as legislative instrument tracking, to manage Council meetings and provide greater access and accountability to the public.

In the next six months, as Council committees and other agencies come online, citizens will be able to follow and track the progress of legislation through other bodies (Council committees, boards and commissions, etc.) to final dispensation by the New Orleans City Council, as well as access agenda item links to related pieces of legislation, staff reports, photos and other relevant documents.

According to City Council President Arnie Fielkow, NOLA GOV. Online and the "user friendly" NOLACityCouncil.com provide exceptional access and transparency.

"Government information has been moving steadily to the web for the past ten years - today, the Council is taking the people's business to an exceptional level of openness. Our redesigned website greatly expands citizen access to our Council proceedings, including votes, documents and videos related to agenda items. Just as important, all of this information will be archived and searchable by date and keywords," Fielkow said.

According to District "C" Councilmember James Carter, Chair of the Council's Cable and Telecommunications Committee, the committee began this process by looking at ways to provide displaced citizens with greater access to government proceedings.



“This technology is one of the most important proactive communications decisions made by the New Orleans City Council in the last ten years. NOLA GOV. Online will significantly improve the Council’s efforts to provide vital information to the public. Our goal was to meet the “best practices” standards for transparency in government meetings, and we believe that we achieve that goal with the launch of NOLA GOV. Online,” Carter said.

City Council Vice President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson commented that one of the most important components of this new technology is that it gives the Council the ability to immediately engage the public in times of emergency and on the important business of the City Council.

“The City Council is now positioned among local governments in providing citizens greater access to its daily business. The idea that a citizen can go right to an agenda item that they are interested in, watch the discussion, and view the documents is remarkable,” Clarkson said.

The redesigned website and streaming video impacts engagement between the City Council and the public in the areas of: emergency preparedness; government transparency; research accessibility; education; resources for citizens and neighborhood organizations; and international outreach. It also provides access to New Orleans City Council meetings and emergency information for citizens and stakeholders outside the City of New Orleans via the internet.

According to Granicus CEO and Co-Founder Tom Spengler, with the launch of the new streaming media solution, the City Council is taking a progressive step forward in reshaping how it communicates to its local, national and international audiences over the web.

“City staff is now empowered with a rich platform of audio/video and legislative management tools to help them increase public awareness and foster more participation online. This technology enhancement will also give them the digital capabilities to heighten government transparency as well as strengthen emergency preparedness, community relations, and international outreach efforts - all critical components of maintaining a thriving community and government business,” said Spengler.

The initial contract is for up to three years and the contract amount was \$266,474.62, of which \$82,961.00 was for equipment and equipment installation in the Council Chamber and at the streaming video sites. The remainder of the contract provides for hosted service and software designed for government use, streaming video, custom interfaces and training. There are ongoing monthly fees of \$4,500.00.

Granicus is a combined “hosted plus software solution” that provides the City a platform for publishing streaming video online and managing legislative proceedings. The integrated voting system allows legislative votes to be electronically recorded from the Council into the Clerk’s meeting minutes, providing a secure and simple digital platform. The City sought a solution that integrates the various processes, such as live and archived online video, electronic recording of legislative votes, annotation of the minutes, automation of workflow, and linkage of associated minutes to the audio/video of the meeting in a consolidated archive that is citizen-centric. In addition, this solution will be utilized to provide emergency notifications and other important public information over the internet.



NOLA CITY COUNCIL

The legislative branch of New Orleans city government

www.nolacitycouncil.com

NOLACityCouncil.com

The redesigned “user friendly” NOLACityCouncil.com website features the latest streaming video technology as well as expanded constituent resources, including Multilingual Functionality; “What Citizens Need to Know” and Emergency Preparedness Information Pages; Meetings and Events Calendars; Enhanced News and Resources Sections; Site-wide Search Function; and a Citizen Comment Form, among other features.

NOLA GOV. Online

The streaming video technology raises the public’s expectation of the order and reliability of government and immediate access to legislative instruments and public policy information. Unquestionably, the technology provides exceptional access and transparency, raising the bar for government to administer and legislate the people’s business more effectively and efficiently. Specifically, the technology provides, live streaming video; scheduled archiving of meetings and programming; automatic publishing of streaming video to the web; automatic indexing of meetings by agenda item; web based search of audio/video records by keyword; linked documents to audio/video record by agenda item; internal and hosted distribution of streaming video content; user/group access control and administration; and an integrated minutes annotation tool for the Clerk’s Office.