



PRESS RELEASE

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Crow Wing County Implements Website Accessibility Solution

Crow Wing County has selected AudioEye, and their Ally Accessibility Platform, to assist in ensuring their public content is accessible for all. The Platform is an industry-leading software-as-a-service that enables continuous accessibility compliance through technology. Currently, content editors are left responsible for the website's accessibility. This involves manually reviewing text, pictures, links, and other content to ensure they meet complex standards of accessibility. The platform continuously monitors the County's website based on current accessibility standards, automatically correcting certain issues while alerting staff.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed in 1990, implemented major changes for businesses and all levels of government so that people with disabilities could easily access roads, physical structures, etc. In 2010 the Department of Justice (DOJ) published ADA Standards for Accessible Design, part of which stated that electronic and information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities. Earlier this year, updated guidelines of Section 508 of the ADA took effect which increased the need to act.

"Crow Wing County is committed to ensuring our website content is accessible," said Deborah Erickson, Administrative Services Director. IT Manager Jay Sikkink noted, "When the Section 508 guidelines were updated in January 2017, opinions across the industry differed on if local governments were impacted. We viewed it as an opportunity to be proactive and do what's right, rather than what is required."

The County is currently in the second of three phases of implementation. During the process, several accessibility tools are made available, and the site is evaluated for accessibility. The toolbar will include the ability to submit accessibility issues found on the site.

"We considered several solutions that took different approaches to addressing accessibility and how they would work with our CivicPlus website," Web Administrator Marcus Cadena stated. "In the end it was clear AudioEye was the right choice. Our CivicEngage content management system already does a fantastic job of ensuring accessibility. Once AudioEye's Platform is fully integrated, it will enhance our ability to ensure equal access for our citizens and other site visitors. We're very excited to be the first government entity in Minnesota to leverage the CivicEngage-AudioEye integration."

Don Torrez, Product Manager and Certified ADA Coordinator for the CivicEngage platform, reinforced the value that AudioEye brings. "For the past year, CivicPlus clients have enjoyed increased assurance for their ADA compliance. AudioEye has provided a way to 'future proof' the website through monitoring and remediation. Websites awarded the AudioEye Certification have a measurable increase in quality

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

and are very user friendly. CivicPlus has been building highly compliant sites for years, and AudioEye brings them to the next level through its managed service.”

“The ability for anyone using our site to raise an accessibility or usability issue is a really powerful feature. Digital inclusion is an ongoing challenge, and this is a great way to promote community driven accessibility,” Cadena expressed.

For more information on the project or Platform, please contact Marcus Cadena at 218-824-1368 or via email marcus.cadena@crowwing.us.

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