



## Allen's new Web site unveiled

10:10 PM CDT on Friday, July 4, 2008

By EMILY GOLDSTEIN / The Dallas Morning News  
[egoldstein@dallasnews.com](mailto:egoldstein@dallasnews.com)

Allen residents, meet [cityofallen.org](http://cityofallen.org) version 2.0.

The city recently overhauled its Web site to provide a cleaner look, improve navigation and promote communication between the city and citizens, officials said.

"We have a variety of things that are new and improved," said Teresa Forsyth Warren, a city spokeswoman.

Ms. Warren and her team spent two years planning the site's renovations, which launched May 30. The site's new look and enhanced navigation system allow users to easily move within and between departments, Ms. Warren said.

In addition to aesthetic changes, the site offers a new level of interactivity. Residents can go online to schedule services such as pickup of household hazardous waste and repair of street lights, sidewalks, streets and sewers.

Steve Massey, Allen's director of community services, said household hazardous waste pickups have nearly doubled under the new Web site.

When citizens use the online forms, they receive an automatic response notifying them that it was received. In addition, the system sends a message to the appropriate city staffer, reducing delays. Another message tells the user when the issue might be resolved.

The simplified process also helps to ensure basic information, such as names and telephone numbers, will be accurate, Mr. Massey said.

"It takes all the mystery out of the note so we can count the information to be correct," he said.

Community services and other city departments conducted research to find Web sites with useful features. Their assessments, along with surveys and user feedback, were incorporated into the final product.

"It's been a fairly long process, a lot of starts and stops," Ms. Warren said.

Ariamedia, the Addison-based agency responsible for the Addison and Southlake Web sites, built the site. CEO Ryan Thompson said the company targets municipal governments, a market he believes is underserved.

Through an ongoing agreement, the agency provides Allen officials with the Web management tools they need to update the site.

"We almost operate like an extension of our clients," Mr. Thompson said. "You can almost think of us as their Internet strategy and marketing department."

The site also features an improved e-mail distribution service, a networked community calendar and a revamped search function powered by Google. Officials are working to roll out other services soon, including online utility payment in August and registration for Parks and Recreation activities in September.