

The City of Medicine Hat Finds Value in a Scalable Solution

MUNICIPAL INSTALLATIONS



CASE STUDY

The Medicine Hat project begins with a community looking to tell a compelling story. The objective was to attract residents and businesses to become a part of a growing community by touting their unique amenities and culture. The challenge became how to best convey these messages using various applications in a variety of locations throughout the community.

The city turned to digital signage as an alternative to the existing static signage already in use, beginning with the selection of a proven digital signage partner, Capital Networks. What followed was a hand in hand process of looking at each city venue as a stand-alone project and meeting those needs but doing so under the umbrella of a content management system that would be common to all the Medicine Hat community locations.



Medicine Hat prides itself on being a safe and affordable city with quality amenities and an emerging and growing creative culture. The mandate and mission of the Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre is to provide a focal point for art, performance, exhibitions and programs as well as a venue for professional and community-based programs and activities.

Community leaders knew that the messages they wanted to convey were being limited by the static signs placed throughout the facilities, understanding that they were incapable of keeping pace with the changes in programs and presenters. This resulted in a failure to keep attendees informed about current and coming events. The team at the Esplanade turned to digital signage as a solution, understanding it had the potential of providing an ideal set of tools to help solve their communication problems. This is where Capital Networks fits into the story.

Capital Networks was selected as their digital signage partner for three primary reasons:

- First an enviable reputation and track record in digital signage dating back to 1991 illustrates the respect earned for what we've done in the past while instilling confidence in what we'll will do in the future.
- Secondly, Capital Networks provides a full menu of content management system options that can be custom tailored to each application. A key part of the process was spending time up front to ensure a perfect fit.
- Finally, providing true hands on service during and after the sale. Medicine Hat and the Esplanade team wanted and needed a partner to engage with and stay the course and Capital Networks provided that.

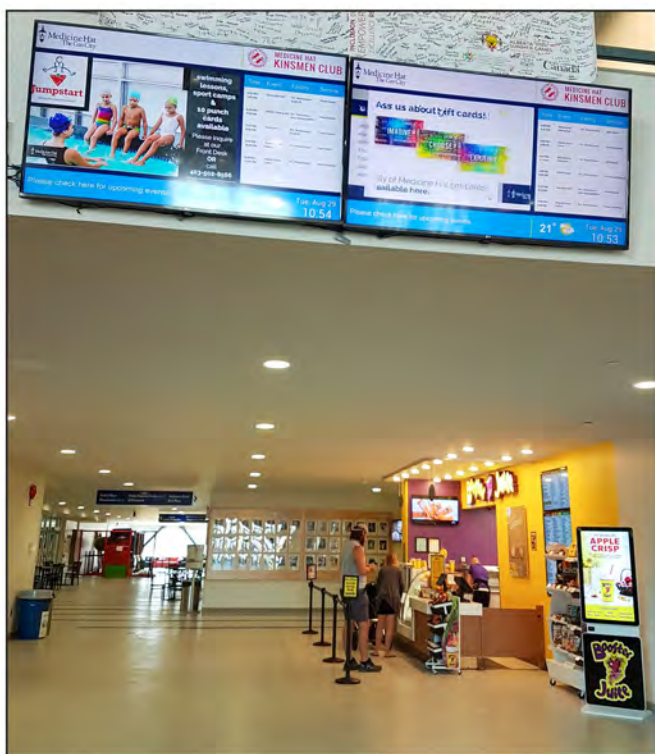
Hosted Software as a Service Model

One of the first decisions was one that would have the most impact on the network. There were two choices on the table. One was to utilize an on-premises solution and the second was to go with software as a service (SaaS), a hosted approach. In discussion with the Esplanade stakeholders, it became obvious that a fully hosted solution was the right one for them for several reasons:

- At the top of the list was that there would be less burden on their staff and allowed them more time for their normal day to day activities.
- Regarding operations, a hosted solution is generally quicker with regards to going live.
- There would be no servers. No server maintenance. No installation needed and as a result, less space needed for storage of equipment.
- Ease of continuing expansion (as Medicine Hat planned to do)
- Since there can also be a fair amount of turnover within municipalities, the hosted model offers the nicety of having to do less training less often.



Discussions between the Esplanade team and Capital Networks revealed potential future needs of the network and this analysis aided in the overall budgeting process. With the lower initial investment of a hosted solution along with tangible benefits, their plan to the municipality was approved.



Armed with a successful proof of concept at the Esplanade, the next logical progression in the Medicine Hat expansion was to address the Family Leisure Centre. With a focus on promoting fitness and sports, this is where the community comes to play. A \$37.4 million-dollar 100,000 square foot expansion had literally tripled the size of the facility and dramatically increased service offerings.

Building on the experience and success of integrating digital signage into the Esplanade Arts Centre, the Family Leisure Centre team and Capital Networks were confronted with challenges unique to this installation. There was the larger space with multiple areas to contend with and the activities being promoted were also more diverse. This brought an increased need to refresh content on a daily and at times hourly basis. The Capital Networks Audience™ platform provided the ability to segment the management of messages as well as the distribution in an efficient manner. Audience™ also permitted various levels of content management access to the various departments while maintaining overall central control.

Expanding the Network

After experiencing the value of digital signage in the two flagship venues for the city, the concept spread out (and continues to spread) to other venues throughout the city. The two most notable in this progression are the City Hall and the Fire Depots around the city.

By design, the City Hall is the administrative hub of the community. It has the responsibility to be a focal point of municipal communications - what's happening in town, upcoming events, and news from a municipal standpoint. Once again, the ability to seamlessly manage and distribute a variety of information types from a variety of sources was key to the success of this venue.



As with the other venues, there were unique needs for Capital Networks to consider when it came to the Fire Depots. Understanding that many staff do not spend their day at a computer, digital signage would serve as a highly visible “dashboard” for immediate dissemination of information. This would include emergency notifications, weather information, integration with data feeds as an in/out program (who's in office and who's off site), employee notices, and health and safety information. Immediate access and immediate response are the keys to what this vital network delivers. The ability to provide custom solutions and support services required by the Fire Depots proved invaluable.

