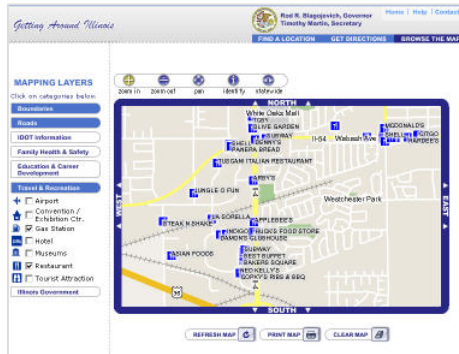


State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Transportation
NASCIO Award Nomination



Title of Nomination: Getting Around Illinois
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Category: Digital Government: Government to Citizen (G to C)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Making the Illinois motorists' experience both safe and seamless has been a long –standing goal for the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). In the past this has involved offering the motorist toll-free phone numbers to call for information on road conditions and a variety of website address of screens each providing additional bits of road condition information. However, in November of 2005 IDOT has merged all of these applications into a single website – “Getting Around Illinois”. In effect, the traveler need only go to www.gettingaroundillinois.com to bring up numerous IDOT Internet based maps which together allow users to have access to multiple layers of information on one page. Once accessed, the user will find information on winter road conditions, road construction, average daily traffic, Chicago public transportation options, multiyear construction program, annual construction program and roadway weather information system information. Additionally the user will find assistance locating points of interest and/or interactive maps that will locate a specific location and provide driving instructions thereto. The system also allows users to find out information on current major road construction projects as well as suggest alternate routes to take to avoid related congestion. Special attention is devoted to motorists driving in work-zone areas where construction workers are likely to be encountered.

Getting Around Illinois is accessed through the IDOT portal located at www.gettingaroundillinois.com.

Interest in the site has been robust to say the least as evidenced by the 3.4 million hits per month since its roll-out in November of 2005. In fact, during one particular winter storm this past December, the site recorded over 1 million hits within a single 24-hour period. Whether it is for commercial or recreational purposes, the site is available to provide map travel destinations such as hotel, restaurant, gas stations, airports, tourist attractions, museums, hospitals schools and government agency locations. Additional helpful features are expected to be added to the site as they become available. The ability to quickly extend and enhance the flexibility of “Getting Around Illinois” is directly tied to flexible, state-of-the art technology that serves as the underlying system infrastructure.



The data that is available on the site is the power behind the system. Users can query information by various geographic regions and print a map of their query. The mapping interface provides users with the ability to interact with the data by turning on and off layers for display. The various mapping layers and data include:

- Road Construction
- Legislative Boundaries
- Average Daily Traffic Counts
- For the Record 2005 – Highway Improvements
- Proposed Highway Improvement 2006
- Proposed Highway Improvement 2007-2012
- Weigh Stations
- Rest Areas
- Roadway Weather Information
- Mileposts
- Outdoor Advertising Control Signs
- Hospitals
- Schools
- Universities
- Libraries
- Airports
- Convention Centers
- Museums
- Restaurants
- Gas Stations
- Hotels
- Tourist Attractions
- Government Agencies
- City Halls
- Court Houses
- Police Stations

A. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

In November 2005, the Illinois Department of Transportation launched a new web site for the public, "Getting Around Illinois" (<http://gettingaroundillinois.com>). The site is a web-based interactive mapping application that is information friendly for the motoring public. Illinois travelers have access to valuable data to assist in planning vacations and routes of travel. Information presently includes locations of construction activity, conditions of roads during winter weather, average daily traffic information along with a complement of public related transportation information. From the site the public can find locations such as addresses, communities, zip codes or a special point of interest, such as a government building or hospital. In addition, users can "Get Directions" to a specific address or from an address to a certain point of interest such as a landmark or museum. What separates "Getting Around Illinois" from other internet sites that provide mapping and directions, is the additional data provided by IDOT such as road conditions, road construction and traffic information. Travelers can not only plan their routes and destinations, but have access to valuable information provided by IDOT that may significantly affect travel time and routes chosen.



The site was designed to facilitate growth and changes in priorities so that additional enhancements would be easy to incorporate. For example, shortly after the site was released, it was decided to incorporate information on the City of Chicago's public transportation system (bus and rail) complete with route maps, schedules and fares. IDOT has also expanded the web-site so that the original design could provide annual and multi-year program data.

The system was designed to handle thousands of queries and geographic searches. The primary software components include ESRI's ArcIMS and ArcSDE, Windows 2003 Server and SQL Server

2003. The primary hardware components include an ArcIMS/Web Server and a Data Server. All spatial data is stored in ArcSDE 9.1 for SQL Server. In some cases, data for the system is stored on separate servers. For example, the winter road conditions data is stored on a separate data server. The IDOT Bureau of Operations uses a form to update winter road conditions directly to the server. The winter road conditions feature of "Getting Around Illinois" queries the database in order to render road conditions accordingly.

B. SIGNIFICANCE TO IMPROVEMENT OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Data Consolidation

This web site has brought a great value to IDOT with regard to consistency and data consolidation. IDOT formally had several different GIS applications available on their web site with a different look/feel and user interface. The new "Getting Around Illinois" provides the users with a single location and consistency with using the GIS features. In addition to using one interface, there is a plethora of information available that may be of use while the user is visiting that would not have been available previously. With this in mind, system development was motivated by the need to have all of the IDOT data available to the public located in the web site and application. Prior to the development of "Getting Around Illinois", the IDOT data for road construction locations, daily traffic volumes, road conditions,

proposed projects, etc., was available but from different web applications. These sites have been consolidated into "Getting Around Illinois":

- AADT - traffic volume counts
- Road Construction
- Winter road conditions (link not present during summer)
- Fiscal Year Multi Year Proposed Highway Improvement Program
- Fiscal Year Proposed Improvements for IL Highways
- For the Record 2005 - Fiscal Year 2005 Highway Improvement Accomplishments
- Roadway Weather Information System

There are also some data that have been added to the site such as the outdoor advertising control signs (OACS), rest areas, and weigh station locations. IDOT will soon be adding bike trails into the site and has plans for adding much more data layers in the future.

The new web site provides one portal for viewing and interacting with various sources of data. The integration of information is a step in the right direction for the agency.

Data Sharing

Qualitative outcomes derived from the development of the application can be noted in the progress IDOT has made in sharing data across bureaus and the reduction in the duplication of data. With IDOT's movement to an enterprise approach, data is not duplicated across departments. IDOT is developing a one-stop shop for information in support of the business intelligence requirements within the department. The one-stop shop will be the 'go to' store, where business end-users and the public at large will choose to go when in the market for information. The one-stop shop will ensure that the information accessed will be consistent, complete, accurate, timely and easily accessible.

With the new statewide data available on the system, this project also sparked the creation of The Illinois GIS Transportation Coalition. The Coalition will be a focal point for all GIS users as well as other GIS Data Providers. IDOT envisions the GIS Transportation Coalition as being a place to share information between all levels of government and to create a comprehensive set of information and source data for statewide road coverage that can be used for location analysis, routing, and other decision support applications for all persons requiring access and information about the state's transportation network. IDOT hopes that the digital road centerline will be a catalyst to share information across government agencies, reduce redundant efforts in GIS, and over time help build a detailed and accurate road network for the State of Illinois.

Cost Savings

The launching of the web site at IDOT has provided the opportunity for many departments to enhance or streamline their operations. For example, in the past, requests would be received by the map room for copies of paper maps of the average daily traffic counts. Staff would be required to collect a fee, process the request and mail out the paper maps. Now, with the information provided through the application, the public and other stakeholders can visit the web site, create and print maps of desired information by geographic area at no cost. Not only has this resulted in a cost savings benefit to IDOT with the elimination of staff resources to process requests, the public no longer has to pay for the information and wait to receive the maps through the mail.

C. BENEFITS TO CITIZENS

“Getting Around Illinois” demonstrates IDOT’s commitment to providing and sharing critical information with the public. IDOT has taken a “no strings attached” approach and works diligently to lessen the gap between the public and government sector services.

Convenience

Today’s motorist lives in a fast paced society. The expectation is to access information from any source without wait time. Anything short of a few seconds is considered unfriendly to the user and is thereby unattractive. IDOT’s “Getting Around Illinois” has a robust design, friendly user interface; and provides one site for all the public’s Illinois transportation needs.

Cost Savings

With consumers feeling the pinch of gasoline prices at the pump, it is more important than ever that when planning a trip or route that the public does not waste time or money in traffic delays or unnecessary detours due to road construction. Getting fast accurate information enhances the motorist’s experience as it helps avoid congestion and unnecessary mileage, lowers fuel consumption and minimizes trip time. For these reasons “Getting Around Illinois” is updated daily with new construction activity and road Winter road conditions are updated continuously before, during and following storms. Information on current traffic counts may also be of interest and can be accessed as well. If it is points of interest the user needs, this site also provides a quick way to view hotels, restaurants and other areas of interest such as museums or other landmarks around or near locations. Thus this new web site provides one portal for the public to view and interact with various sources of information to make their travel as efficient and cost effective as possible.

Customer Satisfaction

Since the site was launched in November of 2005, it has averaged approximately 3.4 million hits per month. According to Mart Hart, Associate Director of the Mid-West Truckers Association, “Gettingaroundillinois.com is a useful tool that provides truckers with daily road construction information, road closures, and restricted routes.”

D. RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Organizational Impact

The consolidation of data and applications through the implementation of the web site, “Getting Around Illinois”, has resulted in the savings of time and resources for the agency. No longer is it necessary for staff to maintain several web sites and duplicate data sources. Further, productivity has improved in that staff are not processing requests for information or printing and mailing paper maps to the public. This information is readily available on the web site and as a result, IDOT staff are now available to perform other tasks.

In addition, the consolidation and integration of the data between bureaus has promoted a data sharing model within the organization. The sharing model also extends to all state and local government agencies who will now be using one base road network for the State of Illinois.

Tasks	Current Practice	Savings to Agency
A consistent and comprehensive road network for the State of Illinois.	This project also launched the statewide road network for Illinois. Prior to its implementation, all government agencies in Illinois were purchasing their own individual licenses of the Illinois roadway data.	With the IDOT and NAVTEQ agreement, all state and local government agencies receive the NAVTEQ Illinois roadway data and the IDOT attributes at no cost. This has resulted in thousands of dollars in savings to Illinois State Agencies.
Increased services to general public.	Prior to the implementation of "Getting Around Illinois", public had to request copies of paper maps and pay fees for mailing and handling.	No specific dollar amount. However, the site is receiving 3.4 million hits per month which translates to free maps and data for the public.

Public Impact

IDOT maintains several roadway characteristics that are of value to the public and private organizations. In the past, these characteristics were available at disparate locations. Now the public can visualize relationships between the various layers of information. For example, a developer can query and view proposed road construction in relation to traffic counts, a traveler can build a route of travel by visualizing road construction, road conditions or closures, etc along with sites of interest.

Long Term Benefit

The "Getting Around Illinois" website provides increased benefits to both the traveling public and other industry groups such as trucking and commerce. The system is available 24 hours a day and information is updated daily by IDOT. While this benefit may be difficult to quantify in terms of dollars, it provides critical and timely information to the public. Providing information to the public in a simpler format was one of the primary goals of the project. A significant benefit of this site is the fact the "Getting Around Illinois" represents a comprehensive and complete base map of Illinois roadway data.

The impact of this technology from a qualitative measure will be a big win for IDOT.