

Utah.gov

Recreation.utah.gov Off-Highway Vehicle Education Course

Category: Digital Services: Government to Citizen

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State of Utah

Project Initiation and Completion Dates:

July 2022 – May 2023

The image shows a screenshot of a website banner for the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation. At the top left is the Utah DNR Recreation logo. To its right is a navigation menu with the following items: BOATING, OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES, GRANTS & PLANNING, and RESOURCES. The main banner features a photograph of a person mountain biking on a rocky trail. Overlaid on the left side of the photo is the text "DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION" in large, blue, semi-transparent letters. Below this text is a light blue box containing the text: "We help Utahns live healthy and active lifestyles through outdoor recreation." At the bottom of the banner are two dark blue buttons with white text: "Take the New OHV Education Course Here" and "View Division of Outdoor Recreation Grants".

Executive Summary

Recreation.utah.gov Off-Highway Vehicle Education Course

The Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation (UDOR) oversees the state of Utah's outdoor tourism and recreation, which contributes more than \$6.4B to the Utah economy and employs more than 83,000 people. UDOR is responsible for ensuring that the state's natural assets can sustain economic growth for years to come. A significant part of the state's recreation is the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails that are used by side-by-sides, snowmobiles, motorcycles, and all-terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Utah has more than 80,000 miles of public off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails that are used by side-by-sides, snowmobiles, motorcycles, and All-terrain Vehicles (ATVs). It is a significant pastime for residents and visitors and is a significant driver for the Utah tourist industry.

UDOR was also exploring ways to help protect recreationists. The popularity of Utah's public trails and lands and the sheer number of recreationists has unfortunately resulted in far too many serious injuries. To combat injuries, Utah sought a way to increase overall awareness and education of Utah's OHV laws and rules to protect the state's outdoor resources, and help increase overall rider safety and responsible recreation.

In 2022, the state legislature passed a law that required all OHV operators to complete an Off-Highway Vehicle Education Course to promote safety. Further, it required that all operators under the age of 18 must have a youth OHV education certificate to operate an OHV on public land, road or trail.

Faced with approximately three months to implement a solution before the January 1, 2023 deadline, and with limited budget and resources, UDOR launched the Utah Off-Highway Vehicle Education Course to meet the deadline, and successfully managed much higher-than-predicted traffic to the site at launch.

The free online course created by the Division takes roughly 30 minutes and consists of 26 questions that are accompanied by educational videos. Since the launch of the online solution, more than 157,000 people have visited the site to take the quiz. Key project milestones include:

- The development of Off Highway Vehicle Course began in earnest in October 2022 and was completed in December 2022.

- The full education course went live just before midnight on December 31, 2022 to meet the legislatively-mandated January 1, 2023 deadline for the program.
- The Spanish version of the education safety course will go live in early June 2023.

Project Narrative

Problem Addressed

The Division of Outdoor Recreation was established in 2013 in the Governor's Office of Economic Development as the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation, it was the first office of outdoor recreation in the country. In 2022, it moved permanently under the Utah Division of Natural Resources, becoming the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation (UDOR). The office has rapidly expanded since, growing from four to about 40 employees in the just past year. Most similar state offices employ five people or less. Despite Utah's expansion of the office, the popularity of Utah's outdoor recreation often creates a situation where field staff tasked with ensuring the safety of recreationsists, are significantly outnumbered by the recreationists

UDOR oversees the state of Utah's outdoor tourism and recreation, which contributes more than \$6.4B to the Utah economy and employs more than 83,000 people. It is the primary driver behind the State's tourism industry. Not only does Utah outdoor recreation create \$737 million in state and local tax revenues, but it is also the reason for \$3.2B in wages and salaries. It is of paramount importance to both the State's economy and the quality of life for Utahns and visitors alike.

A significant part of the state's recreation is the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails that are used by side-by-sides, snowmobiles, motorcycles, and all-terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Utah has more than 80,000 miles of public off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails that are used by side-by-sides, snowmobiles, motorcycles, and All-terrain Vehicles (ATVs). It is a significant pastime for residents and visitors and is a significant driver for the Utah tourist industry.

UDOR is responsible for ensuring that the state's natural assets can sustain economic growth for years to come. UDOR was also exploring ways to help protect recreationists. The popularity of Utah's public trails and lands and the sheer number of recreationsists has unfortunately resulted in a number of serious injuries.

The OHV program manager, Chase Pili, said, "OHVs should not be regarded as mere toys. Improper handling or exceeding the driving capabilities specified by the operator or manufacturer can have fatal consequences."

Despite manufacturer warnings, the availability of free safety classes, and stringent helmet laws, Utah hospitals have consistently treated an average of 1,800 individuals annually for off-highway vehicle (OHV) related injuries for more than 14 years.

A striking statistic reveals that over one-third of these accidents involve children under the age of 19. The Utah Department of Health reports that in a single year, the cost of medical treatment for these injuries surpassed \$11 million, encompassing hospitalization and emergency department expenses.

To combat injuries, Utah sought a way to increase overall awareness and education of Utah's OHV laws and rules to protect the state's outdoor resources, and help increase overall rider safety and responsible recreation.

During the 2022 legislative session, a law passed requiring all OHV operators to complete an Off-Highway Vehicle Education Course. Beginning January 1, 2023, the law requires all operators under the age of 18 must have a youth OHV education certificate to operate an OHV on public land, road or trail. Operators older than 18 years of age must have an approved adult OHV education certificate. Operators are only required to take the course once during their lifetime, and the course was designed to take less than 30 minutes to complete.

The new law tasked UDOR with responsibility for establishing a comprehensive OHV safety education and training program, including the development of a course to instill the knowledge, attitudes, habits, and skills necessary for the safe and ethical operation of OHVs. The law, written in early 2022 gave the agency a short timeline to be in compliance.

The components of the program include the preparation and dissemination of OHV information and safety advice to the public, training of OHV operators, education on the importance of gates and fences used in agriculture and how to properly close a gate, and education on respectful, sustainable, and on-trail OHV operation, as well as respect for communities affected by OHV use.

Under the law, anyone who operates an OHV in Utah must complete the online training course. The law also prohibits the rental of an OHV to an individual unless they present a certificate of completion from the OHV safety education and training program. Violation of the requirements outlined in the law is considered an infraction and can result in a fine of up to \$150 per offense.

Implementation:

Faced with the legislative mandate, a few months to create a solution to meet the deadline, and with limited budget, UDOR worked with vendor partner Tyler Technologies to utilize a low-code/no-code platform to create the Utah Off-Highway Vehicle Education Course.

The first discussions to define the project and scope began in earnest in October 2022. The course consists of a variety of true/false, multiple choice and multi-answer questions. Users are required to complete each section and attest that they have watched the videos in order to complete the course. Once completed, a PDF artifact is “stamped” with the user’s demographic information, input earlier in the course, to create a completion certificate unique to that user. The PDF is provided to users upon completion as well as via an email automatically sent out through the system.

By building the OHV course in a cloud-hosted environment, UDOR was able to quickly scale up additional capacity for the expected high traffic. This became important after online chatter from OHV enthusiasts suggested users planned to overwhelm the system at launch to take it offline and circumvent the new law. Along with the additional hosting capacity, UDOR implemented a commercial queueing system with the solution that allowed for setting the level of interaction to thwart efforts to overwhelm the system. When the number of users accessing the course reached a pre-prescribed level, they were automatically put into a queue and released to the platform as other users completed the course. This allowed for a more steady, user-friendly interaction.

The ability to implement queuing and quickly scale the entire environment became imminently important as the number of submissions quickly exceeded expectations of all parties. Within the first week of the online course being live, it received nearly 23,000 submissions and the submission rate has remained very steady since. The solution has received more than 157,000 submissions to date (January 1, 2023 - May 15, 2023), with the platform handling the traffic extremely efficiently. The Division of Outdoor Recreation created a version of the course translated to Spanish to provide access for Spanish language speakers (June 1, 2023 launch). The team is now going back to these services and layering in the recently-created statewide design system that has been developed by the Utah Division of Technology Services (designsystem.utah.gov).

Impact:

During the weekend that began May 19, 2023, Sand Hollow State Park witnessed an influx of 50,000 individuals engaging in ATV activities. The three DNR officers who were present observed a remarkable sight—people utilizing hand signals while operating their vehicles, a topic covered in the education course. They had never witnessed this behavior in prior

years. Astonishingly, all the individuals the officers interacted with had successfully completed the course, and many even carried a printed "proof" document to validate their participation. UDOR is eager to assess complete-year injury and accident reports to determine the solution's full impact, but the anecdotal evidence is promising.

The Division of Outdoor Recreation uses various key performance indicators (KPIs) to benchmark its utilization, impact on citizen services, and business impact. Here are some relevant KPIs:

Utah Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Education Requirements

Utah's new law requires all OHV operators to complete an OHV education course before operating on public land

Purpose:

- Equip operators with awareness of Utah's OHV laws and rules;
- Increase rider safety;
- Promote respectful, sustainable, and on-trail OHV operation;
- Promote respect for communities affected by OHV operation

Course Required for Every OHV Operator

Age 18+

- Free Online Course
- Complete in 15 - 30 minutes
- Required once and will last for life
- Print or save digital certificate for proof

Age <18

- Required to take the existing, separate online Youth OHV Safety Course - \$35
- Or, take an approved in-person hands-on skills course and exam

Types of OHV with Course Required:

- Type I ATV
- Type II UTV or Side-by-Side
- Type III OHV (unregistered)
- Off-Highway Motorcycles (OHM)

All Street Legal Off-highway Vehicles

Rentals

- Cannot rent an OHV unless the operator has completed the course

Non-resident Visitor

- Must complete the course before operating in Utah
- Purchase an annual non-resident OHV permit for each machine

Exemptions:

- Snowmobile operators
- Implement of husbandry
- Guided tours
- Sanctioned OHV events

Course Now Available

UTAH
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PREVENTION

ohv.utah.gov

Division of Outdoor Recreation

1. Utilization Metrics:

- Participation Rates: Measure the number of citizens engaged in outdoor recreational activities facilitated or supported by the office.
- Facility/Resource Utilization: Assess the usage levels of outdoor recreational facilities, such as parks, trails, campsites, or recreational areas.
- Program Attendance: Track the number of individuals participating in programs, events, or workshops organized by the office.

2. Citizen Service Metrics:

- Customer Satisfaction: Conduct surveys or feedback mechanisms to assess citizen satisfaction levels with the office's services and initiatives.
- Accessibility and Inclusivity: Measure the extent to which the office ensures equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities for diverse populations, including underrepresented groups.

- Educational Outreach: Evaluate the effectiveness of educational initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness, environmental stewardship, and outdoor skills.
3. Economic/Business Impact Metrics:
- Tourism Revenue: Measure the economic impact generated by outdoor recreational activities in terms of tourism spending, including visitor expenditures on accommodations, dining, and retail.
 - Job Creation: Assess the number of jobs directly or indirectly supported by outdoor recreation, such as guides, instructors, park staff, or hospitality employees.
 - Local Business Development: Track the growth and success of local businesses that provide services or products related to outdoor recreation, such as outfitters, equipment rentals, or adventure tourism operators.
4. Website Metrics:

Site Visitors

- Education Course:
 - Page Views
 - January: 973,134
 - February: 476,717
 - March: 701,807
 - April: 1,025,713
 - May: 427,523
 - Bounce Rate
 - January: 6.57%
 - February: 10.3%
 - March: 9.93%
 - April: 9.97%
 - May: 10.36%