

Gateway recommends Windows® XP Professional.



Any city employee in Springfield, Mo., will tell you the City's Department of Information Systems is the standard to beat when it comes to technical support and PC maintenance. Pam Cummings, Help Desk Coordinator for the City of Springfield Department of Information Systems, has maintained that reputation since she took her position seven years ago.

Cummings' arrival coincided with a first-time deployment of Gateway desktops and laptops. The hardware and service change helped her achieve her mission to reduce time spent on technical support and obliterate lengthy repair turnaround times.

For years, the department struggled to maintain knowledge of the numerous different desktop systems used throughout the City. Gateway offered the performance and service that Cummings demanded, so she made Gateway the standard in Springfield City government.

"It is much easier to support a single platform," she said. "It's definitely been a real blessing."

The City of Springfield, Mo., Department of Information Systems maintains a reputation for efficiency and helpfulness.

REPUTABLE SERVICE

Agency: City of Springfield Department of Information Systems

Mission: Improve Springfield's City government operations by maximizing its investment in technology.

Technology Objective: Standardize the City's operations on one high-performance vendor with reliable service, simplifying repairs and troubleshooting.

Gateway Solution: The City of Springfield Department of Information Systems switched to Gateway computers, ushering in a dramatic decline in repair needs and turnaround times.

ROI: Public employees spend more time doing their work and less time seeking technical assistance. Technical support technicians have specialized their repair knowledge on one reliable provider, better enabling them to serve 1,500 users in less time.

Speed and Performance

When Cummings joined the department, an abundance of old equipment made troubleshooting and repairs a challenge.

Her department has five support technicians who serve 1,500 users, averaging 1,200 work orders per month. She needed to ensure all agencies used reliable hardware because equipment quality determined how much time staff spent servicing it.

Each Springfield agency has its own computer budget, meaning Cummings couldn't control the frequency with which they replaced their systems.

She ensures her staff services quality machines, however, by controlling what kinds of machines agencies purchase when they open their purses.

"They have to go through me to get the specs for their computers," Cummings said, "so we can standardize everything."

Technical support staff mostly assists users over the phone, accessing desktops remotely. Working almost exclusively on Gateway machines enables them to use that remote desktop functionality without any problems, she said, adding that the machines are easy to physically open and work on when technicians need to visit them on site.

To streamline the office, Cummings simplified her parts inventory process.

"When I first started, they had a lot of little parts lying around. Now we keep very few parts on site. If something goes wrong with a computer, we simply send Gateway an e-mail telling them what part we need. They ship it to us the next day, and we replace the part," Cummings said, adding that the quick part replacements helped slash repair turnaround times.

She said some agencies resist replacing computers for long periods because they prefer to use scarce budget dollars elsewhere.

"For example," she said, "the Fire Department would rather focus on buying things like fire trucks."

For the past seven years, she has used a process that keeps those agencies using top-drawer computers. When an agency replaces its Gateway computers with new models, Cummings gives agencies like the Fire Department the old Gateways.

The machines perform so well at an advanced age that they seem new to agencies that wouldn't buy anything new otherwise, she said.

"Our department received new computers, so we recycled 15 Gateway computers to the Fire Department. That department had obsolete computers, and now they see the benefits of keeping technology current," Cummings said, adding that the change has empowered the Fire Department staff to finish their work and return to the field more quickly.

Equally important, those agencies' resistance to buying new computers doesn't keep her technical support staff from servicing quality machines.

More Horsepower

Cummings said many of the high-end users follow technology news and routinely bring information to her, asking if Gateway is keeping current. The answer is consistently "yes."

"They get really excited about ordering their new computers because the machines always have the latest technology," Cummings said.

"They like the horsepower because they run AutoCAD and other beefy software that needs a lot of memory," she said. "When new technology comes out, Gateway is always on the cutting edge." The City is currently purchasing the E6610 Gateway desktops.

"They're faster and better performing. They can keep more applications open at once," Cummings said.

Mobility and the Future

Other City employees, such as police detectives, and building and food inspectors, need mobile functionality. Those employees carry Gateway notebooks.

Right now, the City of Springfield has only a few wireless hotspots, but Cummings is ahead of the curve, buying Gateway notebooks with wireless capabilities.

When the City eventually expands its wireless network, Cummings will already have her end-user hardware in place.

"It will be nice when we get to that point because then the inspectors can just stay out in the field," Cummings said.

In the meantime, they log necessary information into their notebooks in the field and connect them to office networks later.



Springfield's mobile employees use Gateway notebooks in the field.

It's the Service

Cummings said Gateway's service outshines the other vendors she has used.

"When I call Gateway, I get a response right away," she said. "They're just so easy to work with."

She remembered when the City's municipal facilities supervisor introduced architectural 3-D software that threatened to not interface with her Gateway video cards. A petty hassle over simple video cards was the last problem she needed. Gateway quickly found and sent her video cards the new software would recognize.

"They just sent me the video card by itself," she said. "We installed it, and everything worked."

And beyond phone support, she said her Gateway sales representative demonstrates genuine knowledge of her department's inner-workings, not just of the products he sells.

"Now that's service."