



Forrest City, Arkansas No Longer Worried About ➔ Legislative Audit Compliance and Now Enjoys Responsive IT Support

As the “Jewel of the Delta” and an important business hub in Eastern Arkansas, Forrest City rests almost exactly between Little Rock and Memphis. I-40, Arkansas Highway 1, and two railways go through Forrest City—making it an important location for both businesses and residents.

Doubling in population since 1950, the city has continued to see steady population and business growth in recent years. To support more businesses and residents, Forrest City's staff at city hall needs reliable technology. However, some uncertainty and technology issues started to hinder the city from not only serving its citizens but also complying with the important Legislative Audit.

Challenge

Forrest City has four primary locations that each had its own technology challenges.

- **City Hall:** In many cases, challenges arose with things such as printing issues and employees needing help accessing their computers. The city's technology support had trouble even completing such simple requests. Uncertainty with data backup and a lack of clear policies also worried the city about passing Legislative Audit.
- **Library:** Because the library needs to give public access to specific computers, some security issues existed related to that access. The software and support for enabling public access also led to inefficiencies and problems with authorizing users. Online, the library's website looked outdated and needed a refresh while making it easier for library staff to update information.
- **Public Safety:** With aging, outdated technology infrastructure, public safety's systems needed an upgrade and some modernization. Some uncertainty also existed with their data backup and disaster recovery.
- **Court:** Computers often froze and locked up, and the city's vendor support was not capable of quickly

handling these issues remotely. Onsite visits were expensive and not timely—leaving employees without working computers for days. Some uncertainty with data backup and recovery existed. Issues with IP phones also lingered, and the city did not have someone on staff to engage technically with the vendor to thoroughly understand and solve these issues.

While some problems overlapped across city departments, many unique problems made it challenging for the existing vendor to serve the city. With the current vendor not up to the task and the city worried about passing the legislative audit, it was time for a change.

Solution

Needing experienced IT professionals who also had significant municipal experience, Forrest City chose the Arkansas Municipal League's “IT in a Box” service.

Once Sophicity began to implement the IT in a Box service, Forrest City had many of its technology issues resolved fairly quickly. The services within IT in a Box included:

- **24x7 helpdesk:** Sophicity provides 24x7x365 support to city staff. Experienced senior engineers are ready to address any IT issue both remote and onsite—ASAP. Forrest City staff no longer had to wait for an unresponsive vendor to solve issues or look up different random IT vendors in the phone book that were not familiar with the city's IT environment.
- **Server, desktop, and mobile management:** Many of Forrest City's issues resulted from a lack of proactive IT management. Sophicity now proactively keeps computers patched, protected, and healthy to both keep computers operating properly and to guard against cyberattacks.

- **Policy and compliance:** Through implementing proactive IT best practices, Sophicity also went a step further by:
 - **Addressing security issues related to Legislative Audit:** Sophicity helped resolve Forrest City's issues with information systems management, contract / vendor management, network security, wireless networking security, physical access security, logical access security, and disaster recovery / business continuity.
 - **Drafting policies to help the city comply with Legislative Audit:** Because Sophicity works with cities that must comply with Legislative Audit, policies and procedures were quickly created that met the demands of auditors.
- **Data backup and offsite data backup storage:** Forrest City received unlimited offsite data backup storage and retention for disaster recovery and archiving. No longer did staff have to worry about data backup with Sophicity's real-time monitoring and quarterly testing.
- **Vendor management:** The city did not have to worry any longer about frustrating calls with vendors about software issues or hardware procurement. Sophicity deals with any technical issues related to the city's IP phone system, the email/fax system, the library software, and other specific technology-related vendors.
- **New city websites:** The library immediately received a modern fresh custom-designed website with Sophicity hosting the website and managing the content. Plus, library staff can now also edit and update website content themselves. With such a great example already in place, city staff are currently working on a new version of the city's website.

Results

After the city switched over to IT in a Box, they experienced many positive results.

- **Forrest City passed Legislative Audit with the burden of the process managed for them:** With their systems secure and the right policies in place, Forrest City passed Legislative Audit without a problem.
- **Responsive IT support led to increased productivity and employee morale:** Employees who grew frustrated with IT issues in the past that affected their productivity for days are happy to now receive remote or onsite IT support for issues that are often resolved in minutes or hours. The ability to call Sophicity 24x7x365 and receive a quick response and resolution to issues has made a big difference.
- **Data backup helped prevent the permanent loss of data:** The city experienced a few incidents—including a virus outbreak—where previously the risk of permanent data loss would have been high. Instead, Sophicity used IT in a Box's data backup solution to get the city back up and running.
- **Sophicity untangled several complex IT problems that addressed employee frustration and lack of productivity:** Some complex issues related to the city's network system setup and library software were unraveled and addressed by Sophicity—leading to long-term permanent solutions rather than the city fighting mini-crises every day.
- **Modernized hardware for a low price:** Sophicity modernized the city's aging hardware while also carefully negotiating prices that are beneficial for a local government. Aware that cities need to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, Sophicity also made sure that the city had the hardware needed to improve productivity and citizen services.



“I recommend that cities consider using IT in a Box. They especially helped us with the Arkansas Legislative Audit. For a city with limited staff, it's a headache for one person to sit down and get all those policies in place. Also, Sophicity is there if you need them for overall IT support. At first, we thought the service was a little costly. But after getting IT in a Box up and going, we all now realize we should have done this a long, long time ago.” – Derene Cochran, City Clerk / Treasurer, City of Forrest City, Arkansas



Sophicity provides the highest quality IT products and services tailored to city governments. Among the features Sophicity delivers in "IT in a Box" are a new city website, data backup and offsite data backup storage, records and document management, email, video archiving, information security policy and compliance, server and desktop management, vendor management, and a 24x7 U.S. based helpdesk for remote and onsite support.

For more information, visit www.sophicity.com.