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## Customer Solution Success Story

# Florissant Valley Chooses APX Data for Inspection and Preplanning

## Overview

**Country or Region:** Florissant Valley, Missouri, United States.

**Industry:** Emergency Services.

**Customer Profile:** Florissant Valley covers a population of over 80,000 and receives approximately 12,000 phone calls a year, making it one of the busiest districts in St. Louis County.

**Organizational Situation:** Let down by a technology vendor and forced to go back to pen and paper for inspections, Florissant Valley knew there was a better way.

**Solution:** Florissant Valley selected APX CityScape for Inspections and Preplanning.

## Benefits

- Paper to digital in 24 hours;
- Achieved 100% preplan targets for 1500 buildings;
- Reduced inspection time by 33%;
- Enhanced ability to administer and manage department.

Florissant Valley moves from paper to digital for preplanning and inspections with APX CityScape, achieves 100% of preplan targets and reduces inspections time by 33%.

*“We were sitting at a table looking at a stack of PDFs, and we just said to ourselves, ‘there has to be a better way’. With APX, we’ve found that better way and, in doing so, we’ve made our jobs easier and safer.”*

*- Cliff Robinson, Fire Marshal*

Cliff Robinson’s journey to Fire Marshal began 23 years ago, working for many different departments within the state of Missouri until finally settling in at Florissant Valley. First as a paramedic fireman then moving into fire inspections and the Fire Marshal’s office. From there Cliff was promoted to Captain and then Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal.

Florissant Valley covers a population of over 80,000 and receives approximately 12,000 phone calls a year, making it one of the busiest districts in St. Louis County. The job of a Fire Marshal requires wearing many hats. For example, plan reviews of any new construction have to go through the office for review and comment. They include things like architectural plans as well as sprinkler and fire alarm systems. The Fire Marshal also has to act as coverage for Battalion Chiefs as they go out for training or help support fire staff.

“I just felt that we needed to be in the 21st Century.”

- Cliff Robinson  
Fire Marshal  
Florissant Valley

Another primary duty is to complete and manage fire investigations; the Fire Marshal has to take on the role of lead investigator for the district or act as backup to part-time inspectors as they complete inspections for over 1500 businesses.

At the time of Cliff’s promotion, Florissant Valley was utilizing Firehouse in an attempt to transform fire inspections from paper to digital. The team found the system was hard to use and actually made their jobs more difficult through many technical issues, including duplication and data transfer (in addition to lack of support for on-going product failures). Apart from the technical and support issues, the software also did not help the department with their preplan requirements. Once the system was retired, Cliff and his team were forced for a time to go back to the historical way of doing their jobs—pen and paper.

I just felt that we needed to be in the 21st Century,” noted Cliff. “It wasn’t sustainable given the demands of the job. Our preplans consisted of binders on the truck with floor plans of buildings. When we needed to update those plans, we would take the paper out and scratch things out and make new notes, and then we’d have to do it manually for the paper in every single truck in the district. The question I kept asking myself was how can we get this information to all the trucks without having

to hand draw a floor plan of a building and passing that out to each of their trucks on there? And what about tracking all activity, managing all that paperwork, the demands of ISO? We just kept saying to ourselves, ‘there has to be a better way of doing all of these things’.”

### A Better Way Found

Cliff was introduced to APX in 2018 and immediately felt that he had found a solution to his most pressing need: preplanning. Furthermore, the solution facilitated getting the best information about buildings to the truck companies in the easiest, fastest, and most efficient way.

“When I was first introduced to APX, I immediately saw how it solved the issues affecting the districts ability to do preplanning. I thought to myself, with an app in the truck and apps in the hands of inspectors, everything being updated in real time, that was perfect,” said Cliff.

To Cliff’s surprise, the CityScape suite also included inspection functionality, and was being employed by other fire departments as part of the preplanning process. “I immediately started thinking about how my guys could do the same, killing two birds with one stone. In doing so, other benefits started to surface. For example, contact information, collected

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during inspections, allows us to contact a building owner ourselves rather than depending on dispatch to do it for us,” said Cliff.

A full deployment of the APX platform could have solved Florissant Valley’s preplanning and inspections problems right away. However, implementing new solutions and technologies has always been a challenge for the public sector. Human, systematic or budgetary considerations always need to be factored into the process. APX Sales and Customer Success worked alongside Cliff to develop a solution that could help Florissant Valley grow over time into their overall required solution, starting with three SmartCapture licenses. This allowed the department to introduce and benefit from new technology, through digital preplans of their current 1500 buildings, while remaining within the discretionary spending budget.

The second phase of the plan included the introduction of SmartInspect to the teams creating preplans. The third phase will include a much broader rollout, including a device with SmartCapture in every truck and the introduction of SmartView, an app that provides rapid and easy access to information for every battalion chief. “The firetruck companies can go out and they can perform a preplan on particular buildings for training using SmartCapture, or they can use it to pull the preplan up in the case of an incident. But a Battalion Chief

just needs to see the information and share it with others, so SmartView is perfect for them,” noted Cliff.

## From Paper to Digital

The APX CityScape suite is a technologically advanced mobile platform created with the user in mind and backed by world-class support. APX customers can go from paper to digital within 24 hours, and are fully operational in 30 days. Such was the case with Florissant Valley, who worked with APX customer success on a quick and easy implementation.

“I’m not the most advanced computer user in the world, but the guys at APX were great in getting us going and helping us as we climbed the learning curve. If there were any questions or issues, I could just pick up a phone and call. I can’t thank them enough for the effort and help,” said Cliff.

In addition to the quick roll out, inspection time was cut by 33% and the goal of preplans for 1500 of the buildings was easily met. For Cliff, the continued goal is to provide the same level of preplans with at least seven inspections per day. “Being able to do both at the same time will allow us to far exceed those goals,” said Cliff.

For more information  
call APX Data at 1-888-240-  
0591 or visit the website at  
[www.apxdata.com](http://www.apxdata.com)

For more information  
about Florissant Valley Fire  
Protection District, visit  
the website at  
<https://fvfpd.com/>

## Getting The Word Out

While the plan for Florissant Valley is a continued expansion on the CityScape platform, Cliff has become a champion of moving other districts into the 21st Century. He has already helped introduce APX to neighbouring departments in Missouri. “Everybody wants dependable technology, and on that note, APX has been good to me. But the way they have stood by me throughout the implementation, the way they have served us up until now, really makes them different. I have nothing but good things to say about the whole experience and results to date,” said Cliff.