OPENGOV

Denton, Texas Embraces Open Data

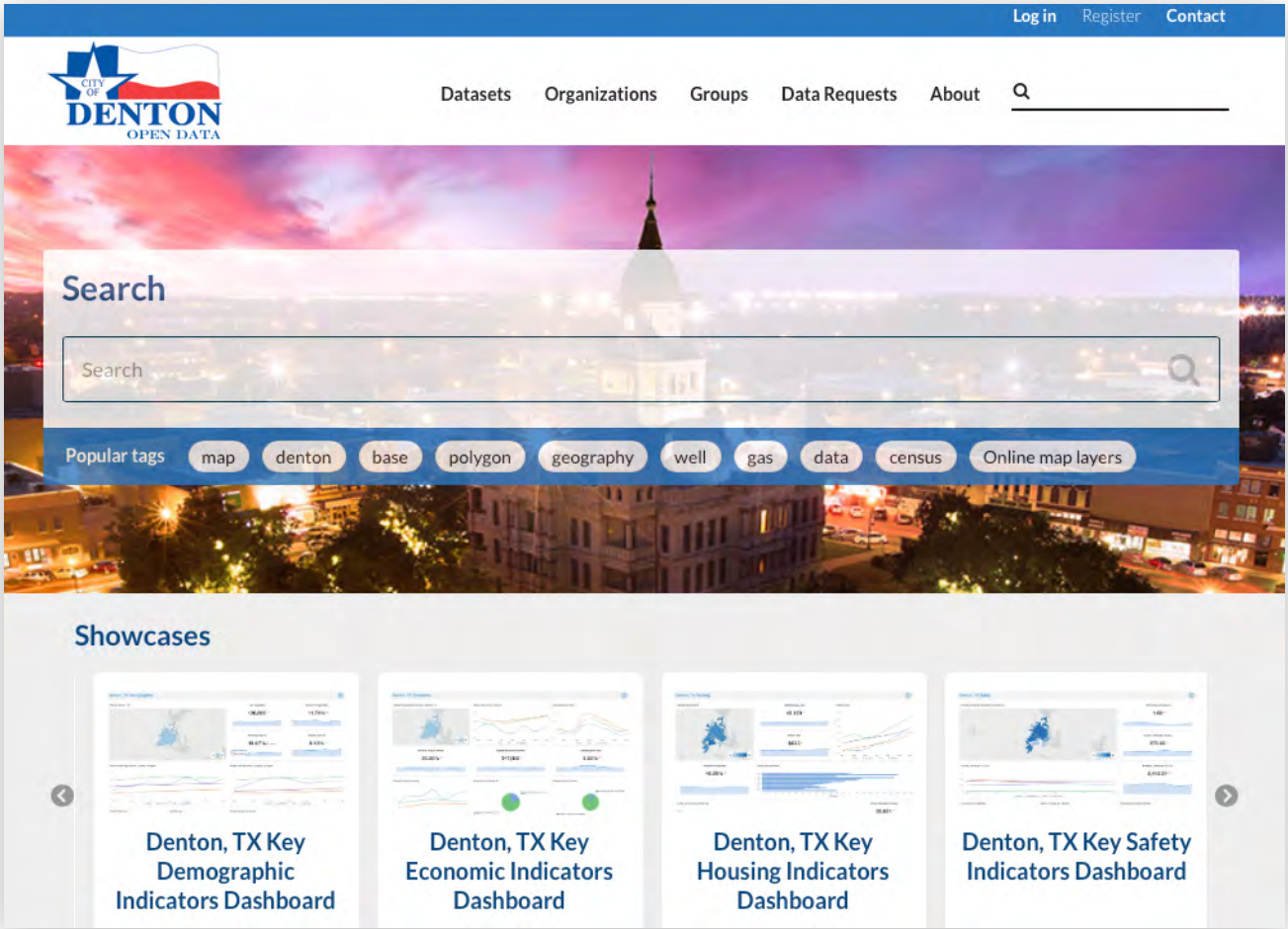
AGENCY TYPE
City Government

POPULATION
114,000

ANNUAL BUDGET
$315 Million

Denton, Texas is one of the state's most vibrant cities. It features two colleges with over 45,000 students and a thriving retail industry. The city's students, professors, businesses, civic developers, and other residents depend on government data. Civic developers build applications that use government data to improve the community; businesses rely on public information to make decisions that determine the difference between profit and loss.

Denton's government recognizes the power of open data to empower residents and businesses. It also recognizes the imperative of providing robust open data. The community has a right to access public information, a right only meaningful if information is presented in a way to convey knowledge. Denton's commitment to openness and innovation, explains Data System Architect Justin Mercier, is why Denton decided to purchase and implement OpenGov Open Data™.



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Success With the OpenGov Solution

Mercier explains how Denton needed "data in a usable format." Before deploying OpenGov Open Data™, the city released its information in PDFs and other formats not easily consumed. "We received a lot of feedback that the data we provided wasn't easy to understand or work with," says Mercier. These barriers meant Denton's tech community couldn't build applications; residents couldn't easily access a central location to search for data; and potential businesses couldn't easily assess Denton's economic condition.

OpenGov Open Data™ removed these barriers.

Working with OpenGov's open data experts, Denton uploaded numerous datasets that span a wide array of metrics to its data portal. Today, the city empowers residents and businesses with 71 machine-readable datasets, from the city's demographic indicators to its upcoming building projects. Anyone can download these datasets in a variety of formats – enabling civic developers and lay-users alike to gain value from public data. Mercier explains how the same solution "works for different demographics. Whether you want to run a hackathon or run a business, the data is usable to you."

Denton Gains the Best of Open Source Through Managed CKAN

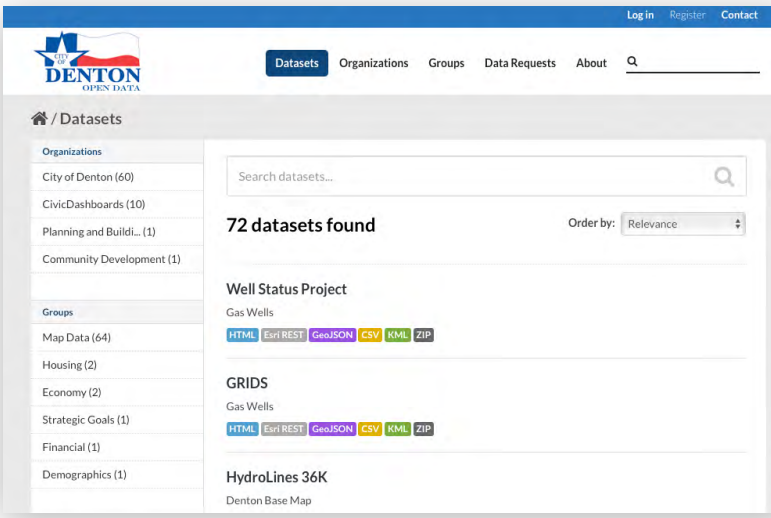
Denton wanted to select an open data platform that is truly on the cutting edge of the field. That's why Denton opted for an open source platform so the city could leverage a community of thousands of developers working on enhancing open data. Denton purchased OpenGov's Managed CKAN solution. CKAN, the leading open source platform, is the industry standard for open data – used by the federal government, the European Union, and hundreds of other agencies around the world. Because CKAN is open source, Mercier explains how it's easier to "take advantage of community efforts" to improve the software.

Denton can use the new features, visualizations, and support tools developed by the open source community, rather than having to pay for costly maintenance inherent in proprietary open data solutions. And because OpenGov manages Denton's solution, the city does not have to worry about installation, maintenance, and implementing upgrades. Mercier explains, "One of the things we gained from OpenGov was a team – Sami, Joel and other open data specialists – who could guide us through our open data experience and who we could reach out to and get answers from in a timely manner."

Empowering Denton, One Dataset at a Time

By leveraging OpenGov's Managed CKAN solution, Denton's data team can focus solely on providing maximum value to the community. This includes the students and faculty who live in Denton and who can leverage Denton's data for projects, research, and analysis. This includes the developers who can sponsor hackathons for residents looking to improve their neighbors' lives. This includes any resident with an interest in the public sector.

Denton has unlocked access to its datasets and enhanced public trust and transparency in the process. With the world's best open data platform, continued support, and the resources to facilitate civic action, Denton is ready to embrace the future of smart government.



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955 Charter Street, Redwood City, CA 94063 • (650) 336-7167