



Client Success Story

A One-Stop Shop for 2x Growth: How Asset Essentials is Preparing the City of Howe, TX for the Future

Client

City of Howe

Location

Howe, Texas, United States

Vitals

Small but growing city with:

- 3,500 residents
- 5 maintenance staff members
- Expected growth of 100% over the next five years

Results

Using Brightly's Asset Essentials, the City of Howe has been able to:

- Understand and track city assets
- Train and provide a reference guide for personnel
- Track work orders
- Access data more efficiently

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Background

The City of Howe, located in a fast-growing part of North Texas, less than an hour's drive from Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), has long operated with a small staff and old-fashioned processes. When Lead Systems Operator Chris Bristow joined the staff in 2019, he was surprised to find the team using sticky notes and spiral notebooks to record and track work orders.

"It was really hard just to keep up with work orders, they were often lost and so the work would go undone," Bristow says. "We never really knew for sure when a certain vehicle was last serviced or if someone remembered to calibrate the wastewater systems each month. If we continued on that track, we were going to be left behind. Our city is expected to grow about 100% within five years, and we needed more accountability and to figure out how to best serve our population."

Bristow previously worked at another small municipality that recently exploded in growth due to its proximity to the DFW district, and he knew what the City of Howe could expect. He began researching CMMS solutions and working to get buy-in from decision makers. His deployment with the Army Reserves during the pandemic delayed the process, but finally in 2023, the City of Howe signed a contract to purchase Brightly's Asset Essentials.

"I liked the asset management part of the program, and that it also includes work orders and inventory management," Bristow says. "It's a one-stop shop for everything rather than having to get multiple different software systems." After several months of implementation and training, the team began using Asset Essentials in March 2024.

Understanding Assets and Personnel

Because the City of Howe had been using a paper-based system, current staff members didn't have a firm understanding of everything the city owned. The process of adding information to the CMMS has helped uncover city-owned assets that were not being regularly maintained or tracked by the city.

"Having to build our information from scratch has allowed us to find a lot of assets that, for example, might belong to the city but are being used by someone else," Bristow says. "Maybe there was a handshake deal in 1955, but we don't have easily accessible records of it. Asset Essentials has helped us set up all the city's assets in a way that we can keep up with and be prepared for a stronger future."

Having all the city's assets, inventory and work order requests in one location also helps Bristow train maintenance techs. "When they need to do a meter change out, the techs can go into Asset Essentials and see what we used the last time we did one and know what equipment they need to get the job done," Bristow says. The city's techs take iPads with them in the field, so they can access the Asset Essentials app at anytime to review requirements and update their progress.

Tracking Work Orders

Gone are the days of misplaced work orders and unknown progress or completion. With Asset Essentials, needed work orders are entered in the system and ongoing preventive maintenance orders are automatically scheduled. “When techs get to work, they grab their tablets and head out to start on their first work orders,” Bristow says. “When they complete a work order, I get a notification, and they move on to the next thing.”

Having a clear, easy-to-follow system is ensuring that city work gets done—and that residents are safe. For example, water systems must be calibrated once a month to ensure that the community gets safe water. While such preventive maintenance was sometimes forgotten with a manual, paper-based system, Asset Essentials automatically assigns the work so it’s never overlooked.

Accessing Data

After just one month of using Asset Essentials, Bristow downloaded reports to share at the City Council meeting. “They saw the graphs and charts and they were really excited about all the work that happened in the city over the past month,” he says.

Moving forward, as Howe amasses more data in the system, Bristow plans to use it to create future plans and forecast budgets. “I can visually see everything in front of me, so it’s easier to plan for the work that’s coming up and the equipment we’ll need to get it done,” he says. “Over time, I’ll be able to forecast how much each job will cost based on past data so we can budget in advance. We’ll also be able to show how much work our employees are able to get done, and show the evidence when we need to hire new people.”

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Lead Systems Operator, City of Howe

