

Powering Next Generation Economic Development

Move to the Top of the Short List

Michael Cleary, Chief Operating Officer, GIS WebTech

For economic development organizations (EDOs), getting on the short list is paramount. It is the opportunity to attract investments, create jobs, increase tax revenue, and improve the quality of living.

Site selector consultants, hired specialists, or corporate employees identify the best communities for relocating or expanding their business. They are data driven when making site recommendations, creating a list of potential communities by using several data sources. To shorten the list, these people anonymously research the long-listed EDOs' websites to gather data that can only be found through the local EDO. Based on their findings, the site selectors create the short list.

This process is more commonly known as site elimination rather than site selection. Unless contacted by the site selector, the EDO has no idea that it is under consideration or if the site selector has visited its website.

The Challenge

According to the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) 2016

publication *A New Standard: Achieving Data Excellence in Economic Development*, "The factors most influential in making location decisions are available sites and buildings; infrastructure and utilities; workforce characteristics; wages; and labor market characteristics." Much of this data is available only from the EDO, but "80% of site selectors will not contact an EDO until they have compiled a short list of potential communities." Why? Because "site selectors are able to access specific data about potential locations faster through online sources than through economic development offices." Hence, providing data and analysis resources online is crucial in order to get on the short list.

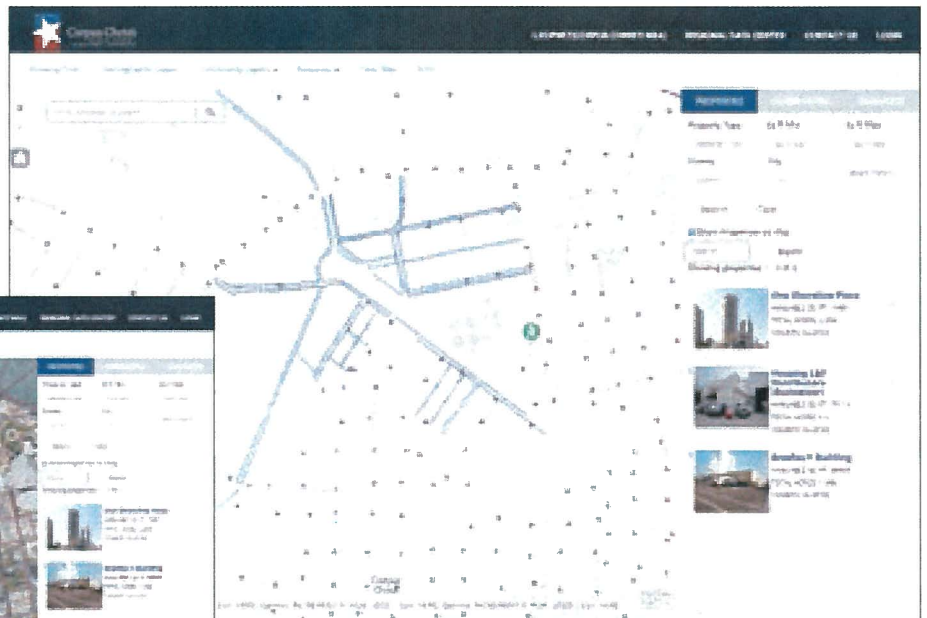
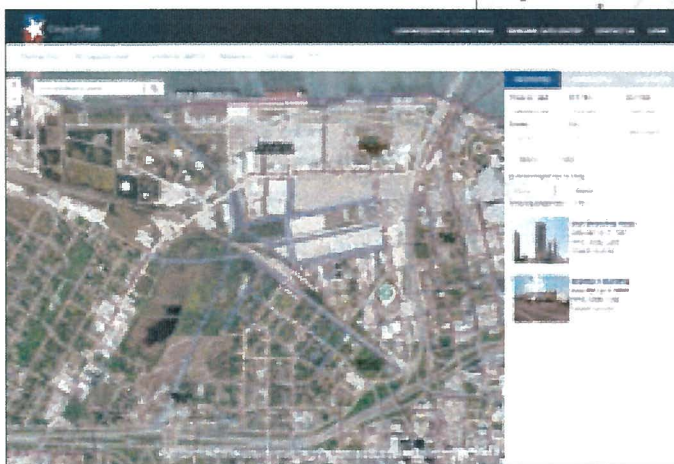
With more than 20 years of experience with state, regional, local, and utility organizations along the Gulf Coast, Tommy

The Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation (CCREDC) is a private/public nonprofit organization responsible for creating, managing, and supervising programs and activities that promote, assist, and enhance economic development within the city of Corpus Christi. The CCREDC's partners include the City of Corpus Christi, the Port of Corpus Christi Authority, and over 180 private-sector members serving a population of 450,000.

Kurtz joined the Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation as vice president of Business and Strategic Development in October 2015. His focus is to recruit major industrial and manufacturing projects to the Texas Coastal Bend and develop and implement a targeted business recruitment program.

To get short-listed, Kurtz had a vision to connect the regional counties and municipalities to share data using a common

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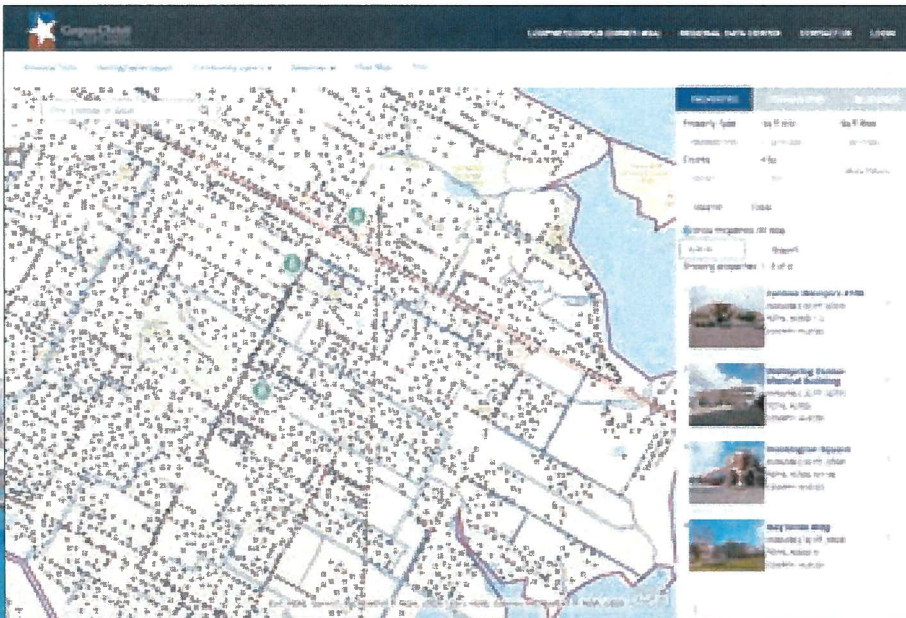
← Infrastructure Layers Supporting Selected Properties Using the Imagery Basemap

↑ Infrastructure Layers Supporting Selected Properties Using the Light Gray Canvas Basemap

technology platform. The next step was to thread it together with national, federal, state, and local data and display this through an online solution for site selectors.

His primary questions were about what technology was available to manage and demonstrate the data to attract and retain site selector interest. The next questions focused on the available critical data that site selectors value such as sites, buildings, and infrastructure layers (e.g., rail, waterlines, and pipelines).

↓ Infrastructure Layers within Specific Geographic Areas



The Solution

To start, CCREDC invested in ArcGIS Desktop and ArcGIS Business Analyst Online, ensuring platform consistency and data collaboration among stakeholders.

CCREDC switched its online site selection solution to GIS WebTech Recruit. Recruit is built natively on ArcGIS, and—unlike other market solutions—Recruit allows clients to control data and layers and make them accessible to their target audience.

To bring the regional partners’ data into a single solution, GIS WebTech collaborated with the stakeholders and

synchronized map services, hosted in the cities’ and counties’ ArcGIS accounts, with Recruit.

GIS WebTech provided CCREDC with an administrative panel to manage the infrastructure layers, enabling staff to select the layers they wanted to activate and decide which layers to make publicly or privately accessible. Selections are immediately active and accessible to site users.

According to Kurtz, “The City of Corpus Christi was very favorable, as were the other counties and municipalities. A few of the counties, like San Patricio, and cities, like Corpus Christi, were already Esri users, so being on the same platform made this collaboration and sharing process much easier.”

The Results

Since going live, CCREDC is responding to more proposal and information requests from sources like the Texas Governor’s

↓ City of Corpus Christi Waterway (© Bob Redding)



Office of Economic Development and Tourism, national site selectors, and real estate brokers. CCREDC is receiving more calls and interest with the new site. Prospects, both foreign and domestic, are very impressed with the access and completeness of available data as well as the site responsiveness.

Property owners recognize that this provides the best chance to present their properties to decision-makers.

A major benefit is data consistency through an automated solution. The authoritative source maintains its system of record, and when staff make a change to the data, it is automatically revealed in Recruit, ensuring that users have up-to-date data. No action is required of CCREDC.

“With Recruit, I am able to demonstrate the solution online and take it on-site with prospects to demonstrate all infrastructure layers—including sites that are most attractive for industrial development—by showing sites that are not in flood zones; are near four-lane highways, key pipelines, rail lines; et cetera. There is no substitute for this solution to show this kind of information,” Kurtz said.

The Partner

GIS WebTech, an MWBE technology developer based in Atlanta, creates solutions specifically for economic development clients. Recruit, the company’s flagship solution, helps economic development organizations attract investments and grow existing businesses within their communities. Corporate site selectors can identify and analyze ideal locations. GIS WebTech solutions are built natively on the ArcGIS platform, ensuring compatibility and data consistency with other Esri GIS products. To learn more, contact Michael Cleary at michael@giswebtech.com or call 203-297-1433.

go.esri.com/GISWebTech

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