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Elgin to launch new website for easier use on computers, phones

By JANELLE WALKER
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An overhaul of city of Elgin's website should give residents better access to city information and a better user experience on smart phones and tablets once it's launched later this month, officials said.

"With more mobile capability, this is really an opportunity to refresh our information and better tell our story in as many different lenses as possible," said Molly Center, communications specialist for the city.

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The change comes at the same time Elgin's Downtown Neighborhood Association has revamped its website, which should make it more compatible with the city's website, executive Director Jennifer Fukala said. Plans are also in the works to update the Elgin Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau site — rebranded to Explore Elgin Area — sometime after July 1, officials said.

"Explore Elgin Area will be working on a new website ... that will spotlight local events and attractions for visitors and residents. We will work with a designer to better integrate the content with the city of Elgin and Downtown Neighborhood Association of Elgin's new websites," said Krisilee Murphy, director of marketing for the bureau.

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Center said the city has been working with consultants on the web update, which will be set up in parts — a main page designed for easier searching and browsing and a web portal designed to give residents more personalized access. The portal is powered by Salesforce, the city's software provider, and will require users to have a password and log in.

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In the current website, “you had to know where you were going to find information,” Center said.

The new site breaks down searches into categories — work, live and play — to help users better find the information they are looking for. The “home” button and the search bar will also appear on every page to help users navigate the site, according to Karina Nava, Elgin’s management fellow.

The portal will allow residents to pay water and other bills online and conduct other transactions, Center said.

The website employs a Google-based search to find information on the site.

“The search is very nice — it isn’t going to pop up Google ads, it will just be what you are searching for,” Nava said.

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locations have the information the user is looking for, they said.

“We will be using our community resources more ... so we don’t have to duplicate efforts,” Center said.

Launched in late April, the downtown association site “will work collaboratively with our community partners ... providing links to the city website, Explore Elgin and the (Elgin Area) Chamber so as to not duplicate information unnecessarily,” Fukala said.

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