

Exploring AI Innovation with Wyandotte County

As local governments explore the possibilities of artificial intelligence (AI), the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, is already demonstrating how data-driven innovation can improve both efficiency and public trust. By combining customer feedback with measurable outcomes, the county's Innovation and Performance team identified an opportunity to transform its call center operations and deliver faster, more accessible service to residents.

At the center of this transformation is Crystal Sprague, director of innovation and performance, who has championed the county's early adoption of the Government Experience Agent (GXA) from Granicus. In this conversation with Luke Norris, vice president of platform strategy and digital transformation at Granicus, Sprague shares how her team used data to diagnose service challenges, built cross-department collaboration, and implemented a scalable AI solution that's already improving citizen satisfaction.

Their discussion offers a real-world look at how thoughtful technology implementation — grounded in trust, partnership, and empathy — can make government not just more efficient, but more human.



NORRIS: Crystal, thank you so much for joining me today. You've been an early adopter of the Government Experience Agent, and I'm excited to hear about your experience. **Let's start with how you used data to identify a problem that AI could help solve.**



SPRAGUE: Thanks, Luke. We always start with data to see what the numbers are telling us, but the data story really begins with what the customers are saying. In public service, what we often call complaints are really just requests in disguise. Listening to those voices — especially through our 311 call center — helped us see that people weren't getting their questions answered the first time they called.

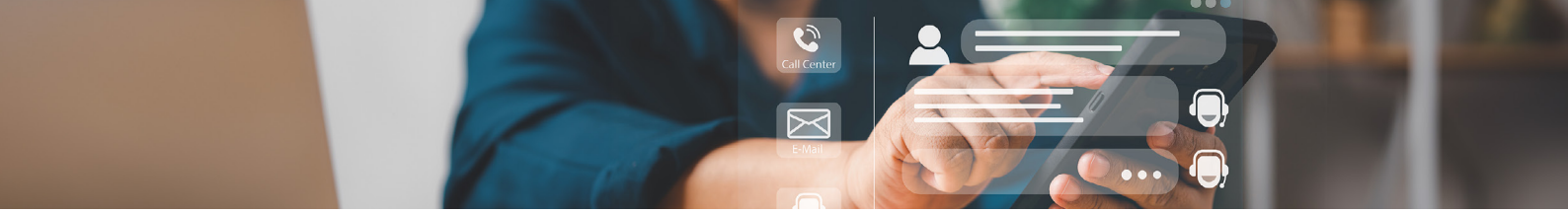
Our 311 center fields about 70,000 calls a year, and with only five representatives, that gives each about two minutes per call. That's not enough time to really solve an issue. We also learned that our Treasury Department, which handles motor vehicle and property tax calls, was receiving about the same number of calls and had created a makeshift call center. Staff were being pulled from their normal duties to answer phones all day. That's when we realized we needed a new approach.

NORRIS: That's a big challenge. How did you determine that AI could help, and what goals did you set for improvement?

SPRAGUE: We landed on a goal to reduce call volume by 30% at the Treasury Office. We found that about a third of those calls were for answers already on our website. If we could redirect those residents to self-service tools, it would free up skilled staff to focus on more complex issues.

We created a multidisciplinary team to map out the process. As the saying goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." By including the treasurer and others, we focused on what would really move the needle for customers rather than just implementing a product.

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Q **NORRIS: That's a great approach. So why did you choose to partner with Granicus for this project?**

A **SPRAGUE:** We knew we didn't just want a vendor — we wanted a partner. Partnership, fit, and trust were our priorities. We've worked with Granicus for a long time, and that relationship is based on shared values. We both believe the customer comes first and that technology should improve service, not complicate it.

We also needed a solution we could trust. Through the Government Experience Agent's admin console, we can make updates and see what residents are engaging with in real time. That gives us control and confidence that the information being shared is accurate.

And with 31 languages spoken in our county, inclusivity was critical. We wanted every resident to get the same quality of service. Everyone who works for our government lives here — these are our neighbors — so we treat them like it.

Q **NORRIS: That's wonderful. How did the implementation process go, and what did you learn from it?**

A **SPRAGUE:** Process is everything. We found that having a structured, disciplined process made all the difference. Granicus brought that to the table and made sure our staff were deeply involved. They didn't just hand us technology — they collaborated.

We did side-by-side testing, letting our staff hear what residents were saying in real time and provide feedback. That hands-on approach helped build confidence. Granicus also used automated testing tools so we could validate our content before launch. I felt confident that when we went live, it would be right.

Q **NORRIS: And it sounds like it worked. What results have you seen since launch?**

A **SPRAGUE:** We wanted a proof of value, not just a proof of concept. Within two weeks, the agent handled about 800 conversations. That's huge for a small pilot.

We usually get negative feedback on our website because no one likes paying taxes or renewing car tags. But since going live, we've started to see positive feedback — actual thumbs-up icons on our pages. That tells me people are having a better experience. The agent helps them complete their tasks, which is what we're all here to do.

Our staff love it too. They're using the agent themselves to find information faster. We realized we didn't have a content problem — we had a consumption problem. The agent made our existing information easier to access.

Q **NORRIS: That's such a great insight. How are you thinking about scaling this work across other departments?**

A **SPRAGUE:** Once you do it once, people expect you to do it again. Granicus set us up with the tools to replicate the process across departments. The model is scalable and grounded in customer-centered design.

Our next step is using data and feedback to decide where to go next. We don't want to pick departments at random. We're asking, "What are customers telling us? Where can we move the needle most on satisfaction?"

Q **NORRIS: That's an excellent strategy. Any final thoughts on what this project means for the future of government service?**

A **SPRAGUE:** I think it shows what's possible when you combine innovation with empathy. Small wins become big wins. Ultimately, we didn't have a content issue — we had a consumership issue. Now our residents are getting their answers faster, our staff have more time for meaningful work, and trust in local government is growing. That's the goal.

Q **NORRIS: That's inspiring. Thank you for sharing your story, Crystal. I know your success will inspire other communities to take similar steps.**

A **SPRAGUE:** Thank you, Luke. It's been a great partnership, and we're excited for what's next.

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– Crystal Sprague, Director of Innovation and Performance, Wyandotte County

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