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Officials embrace move to Google  
By S. BURDETTE, Correspondent

HOLLY HILL -- Holly Hill moved further into the 21st century recently as city officials announced two technology changes to save money and make access to the inner workings of city government easier.

### STREAMING AUDIO

Unbeknownst to most of those who attended the May 11 City Commission meeting, the proceedings were streamed live over the Internet to anyone clever enough to find the link. Scott Gutauckis, the city's information technologies director, told commissioners he was testing a free service that mirrors what some other local cities, like Ponce Inlet, are doing.

After the meeting, Gutauckis reported a generally successful test. The last 19 minutes of the meeting were not broadcast but other than that, it worked as advertised.

Gutauckis said he investigated the problem and has resolved the "glitch" so that none of the meeting will be lost.

City officials looked into a service last year but found the cost to be "prohibitively expensive." This service is free, with the vendor, U Stream, displaying advertising on the screen while the audio of the meeting plays.

Unless further issues crop up, audio of the May 25 commission meeting will be available online at [ustream.tv/channel/cityofhollyhill](http://ustream.tv/channel/cityofhollyhill) for your listening pleasure.

Officials will continue to record meetings using the city's internal hardware and publish those recordings on the city's website.

### GOOGLE APPLICATIONS

Anyone who has a computer is certainly familiar with Google, not only as a brand name but now as a verb -- such as "to Google" someone by searching the internet. What many people don't know is that Google is much more than a search engine. With a share price of more than \$500 and annual sales in the billions, Google ranks 102 on the Fortune 500 list, right behind Publix and Amazon.com and ahead of McDonald's and Macy's.

While much of Google is free to users, the company offers many fee-based services, including "Google Apps." This enables businesses and governments to scrap their own servers and software and use Google's.

And boasting customers like the city of Los Angeles and Motorola provides instant credibility.

Holly Hill's first venture into "Software as a Service" will be moving existing e-mail from the city's internal servers using Microsoft Exchange to Google's G-mail. While it will cost the city about \$9,000 a year, it will save \$28,000 in infrastructure, hardware and software costs this year, officials said.

The transition is under way as the new system and current system are "running in parallel."

Gutauckis said he hopes to have the transition complete with everyone on the new platform by the middle of June. E-mail addresses won't change, so the move should be transparent to the outside world.

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