Apache Junction is a desert community located 35 miles east of Phoenix, Arizona, in an area bordered by the Superstition Mountains. The city has a population of about 42,000, which nearly doubles from mid-October to mid-April with seasonal residents. A community with roots in mining and transportation, it is actively working to develop the area as a contemporary showpiece for retail, office, and downtown residential living. In serving the needs of full-time and seasonal residents, the City of Apache Junction employs 250 full-time and part-time people across a range of departments, including public safety, development services, parks and recreation, and facilities.

**CHALLENGES**

- A manual review and approval process of paper timesheets and keying of employee time data into separate payroll and HR systems created a time-consuming duplication of effort that was prone to error and required payroll adjustments.
- Supervisors and payroll staff couldn’t be sure the time employees listed on timesheets was accurate.
- Tracking of employee leave time on Excel spreadsheets was laborious and limited employee access to up-to-date accrual information.
- Manual tracking of overtime provided no real-time visibility or transparency of overtime costs and whether overtime was equitably allocated.
- No clear reporting mechanism to view trends in absenteeism, overtime, and scheduling.

**SOLUTION**

- An integrated and automated timekeeping, HR, payroll, and absence management solution to improve efficiencies, accuracy and transparency of workforce information, and control of labor costs.

**BENEFITS**

- A central HR and payroll system has eliminated double entry of data, reducing errors and payroll processing time and freeing up payroll staff for other tasks.
- The automated workforce management system’s visibility and transparency provide easily accessed real-time labor data.
- Overtime is now more fairly allotted and overtime costs have been reduced across the organization.
- Workforce management efficiencies and cost saving measures have helped the city through tough economic times.
- Automated leave solution will streamline leave management and provide visibility of up-to-date information.
The City of Apache Junction had been using paper timesheets to track employee time and accruals, and needed to key this information every pay period into separate automated payroll and HR systems. This duplication led to errors, as did the manual review and approval of handwritten timesheets. Although employees often listed the same time each day, with no automated tracking system supervisors and payroll staff weren’t sure if timesheets were accurate. Without visibility into overtime, the cost of overtime also wasn’t apparent until after it was accrued, and overtime wasn’t always fairly distributed.

Knowing that it needed a single automated workforce management system to overcome these issues, the City of Apache Junction searched for a solution. It wanted a vendor with a record of stability that could combine timekeeping, payroll, and HR processing into a single system to streamline processes. The city selected the Kronos® Workforce Central® suite. Using the automated solution, the city has cut payroll processing time, reduced overtime, and realized efficiencies and cost-cutting that have helped during difficult economic times.

**Payroll efficiencies and accuracy boost productivity**

All of the city’s exempt, non-exempt, and contract employees, including those in public safety, use the Kronos solution. Many employees log in at their computer, while others use Kronos 4500 Touch ID biometric terminals. The accurate, automated transfer of employee time into the integrated payroll and HR solutions has also eliminated payroll errors.

“Our productivity level has increased,” says Anna McCray, executive assistant to the city manager. “Our staff time dedicated to payroll and getting payroll processed has decreased, so they can focus on other duties.”

Paper use has decreased significantly, too, with paper timesheets no longer printed on legal paper and distributed to city facilities. Storage of completed timesheets is not an issue now.

**Cost-saving measures and controlled labor costs help save jobs**

Previously, with no accurate tracking or documentation of employee time, time inflation was a concern. In addition, some supervisors appeared to repeatedly grant overtime to the same employees, not spreading it equitably across a department. The Kronos solution has helped change this, as well as provide a reliable time audit system to help ensure compliance.

“As a local government agency, visibility and transparency is very important to us, but we couldn’t display that then and we knew overtime was a problem,” shares McCray. “Kronos has helped us in reducing overtime and allocating it more fairly.”

The city has seen other benefits, too. “Like other government entities, we were in crisis mode with the downturn in the economy, so we had to turn over every rock to save money and to save jobs,” she explains. “With our Kronos solution we were able to scrutinize overtime more. And while we did have to lay off some people, it wasn’t as bad as it could have been had we not had the tools in Kronos, and scrutinized every invoice and purchase.”

**Automated leave management to increase satisfaction**

When the automated workforce management system was introduced, some employees were resistant to change, but training that focused on the benefits of streamlined processes helped employees see these advantages. The current paper-based leave process also will be streamlined soon. During an upcoming upgrade, the city will add Kronos Workforce Leave and employee self-service tools, giving employees access to real-time accrual balances and automated leave requests and approvals in the system. Those without computer access will perform these activities at stations installed at field offices.

The addition of Workforce Leave will streamline tracking of FMLA, providing an up-to-date accounting of time accrued and taken under the Family Medical Leave Act. In the event of an audit, the accurate, easy-to-access leave information will help support compliance.

“Most employees haven’t yet seen the true potential of Kronos,” says McCray. “The leave module and self-service will be a piece in which they say, ‘We see now that this puts us in the driver’s seat, more than with paper.’”