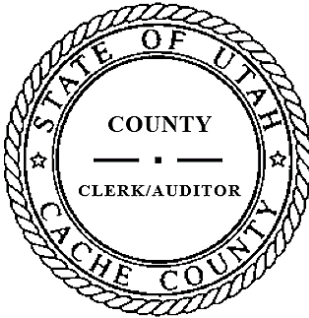


CACHE COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

2022



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK/AUDITOR

Prepared for the County by X-Factor Strategic Communications

Project Name – Communications Audit	Workpaper Index # 5
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Introduction

Over the past several decades, Cache County has transformed from a relatively quiet agricultural community and small college town into a booming economy with thousands of jobs in diverse industries including education, manufacturing, food and agriculture, aerospace and technology. The county's population growth reflects this transformation with 20,500 new residents – an 18% increase in population since 2010. It is also home to a large young-adult population with the second largest university in the state at Utah State University.

Overall, nearly 140,000 individuals live in Cache County, which places great responsibility on the county to ensure it is communicating and reporting to residents on the activities of their county government. If the county does not effectively communicate to its residents, then the county government may be viewed as incompetent or unconcerned about informing the public. This should be the primary reason for the county prioritizing its communication efforts in 2022 and beyond. In addition, if Cache County does not increase its communication efforts about the county's services and community benefits, then residents may also be drawn away to other labor markets in the state.

In addition to communicating with residents, the county could benefit from improving its communication with its external stakeholders. Although Cache County has changed considerably over the years, its reputation outside the county has not kept up. The external perception is that Cache County remains as a quiet member of Utah's overall economy, even though thousands of people are moving into the county and it is home to one of the strongest workforces and lowest unemployment rates in the state. If Cache County does not prioritize proactive communication efforts, then they miss out on furthering its economic opportunities due to external misperceptions.

Increased communications efforts would significantly help Cache County's reputation as a competent and responsible government entity, help its residents feel part of a community, and improve its perception to external stakeholders for partnership opportunities. To achieve these goals, the best practice is to develop a strategic communications plan, which outlines the county's objectives, audiences, messaging, strategies and tactics for a specific timeframe. To help inform a future strategic communications plan, X-Factor Strategic Communications conducted a communications audit on the county's current communications efforts. The audit identified the county's strengths and areas for improvement and provided a baseline analysis of efforts to compare to future efforts. This audit report categorizes current efforts and recommendations into five major categories:

- **Traditional media & communications ([pg. 3](#))**
- **Social media ([pg. 6](#))**
- **Website ([pg. 10](#))**
- **Direct mail & newsletters ([pg. 12](#))**
- **E-newsletters ([pg. 15](#))**

Recommendations are explained in detail within each category and are also organized into a high-level implementation timeline ([Appendix I, pg. 18](#)) with suggested timing to prioritize the recommendations. Overall, the audit revealed a great potential for Cache County to increase its communication with residents, businesses and external stakeholders.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Cache County’s current communication situation is summarized below by its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, known as a SWOT analysis. This explores the main aspects of the county’s communication efforts and where the county could focus its efforts moving forward.

Current Communication Situation in Cache County

<p style="text-align: center; color: #A52A2A; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">STRENGTHS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong relationship with local media in Cache County. 2. Already have a foundation built for the main social channels. 3. Staff understand the value of a press release. 4. A strong core audience on social media platforms. 5. PR Advisory Committee provides input and guidance on efforts. 6. Already have a verified account on Twitter. 	<p style="text-align: center; color: #A52A2A; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No press release distribution to the Salt Lake City media market. 2. Lack of presence on TikTok. 3. Lack of communications director and team to streamline processes and messaging. 4. No direct mail or print newsletter may inadvertently leave some residents out of the loop. 5. No e-newsletter to deliver news to residents and businesses.
<p style="text-align: center; color: #A52A2A; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive stories about Cache County can be proactively shared to the media and on social media. 2. Streamline the news section on the website to share news and link to it from social media. 3. Potential to create a print newsletter and e-newsletter as new outreach tools to residents and businesses. 4. Utilize TikTok to reach the younger population within the county. 5. Reach residents through direct mail efforts to break through the digital noise. 6. Sense of community could be improved by communications efforts. 	<p style="text-align: center; color: #A52A2A; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">THREATS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. County could be viewed as incompetent or unconcerned about informing the public. 2. Residents could be angry or frustrated at the county for not being communicated ahead of time. 3. External misperception may cause Cache County to miss out on economic opportunities. 4. Residents may leave the county because of lack of community and be lured away to another labor market. 5. Businesses may leave the county if they do not feel supported and do not see a promising economic future in Cache County.

CATEGORY #1

Traditional Media & Communications

Current Situation Analysis

Traditional media efforts include press release distribution to media outlets and sharing news on the county's own online platforms. It also involves thinking beyond the press release and creatively angling positive news about the county, developing relationships with the media, and ensuring all staff are consistent with their messaging and responses to media inquiries. In 2021, the county began to actively distribute press releases.

Press release topics included securing economic development grants, honoring Chief Deputy County Executive Bryce Mumford, the Cache Summit event, and transportation efforts. The county understands the value of a press release and the importance of notifying the media of important events and news. Cache County has successfully started a foundation for notifying the media and general public about its important news. In this coming year, it has the opportunity to expand its efforts and leverage traditional media efforts to further increase awareness among its residents and shift the perception of Cache County throughout the state.

Recommendations to Improve Traditional Media Efforts

1. **Proactively Share Positive News:** Cache County can take advantage of highlighting positive news and creating accolades for itself when it is performing better than other counties. For example, Cache County has topped the list for having the lowest unemployment rate out of any county, but has never officially announced this in a press release or on its social channels. This is a great press release and social post opportunity. Be creative and find an interesting positive news angle in what might not be an obvious promotional opportunity.
2. **Create a Media Kit and Add a Boilerplate to Press Releases:** Make the reporter's job easier by including images for a print reporter and video b-roll for a broadcast journalist. They will be more likely to run a press release as a story if there are already visuals ready to go. To start building a digital library with overview stock images and video of Cache County, it is recommended to hire a professional photographer. In addition, be sure to include a boilerplate (100 words or less) at the end of the press release. This provides a brief overview of Cache County, and shares the overall message that the county wants to promote about itself.
3. **Conduct Deskside Briefings with News Outlets:** A press release can only go so far, especially if it is distributed to reporters who have not written about Cache County in the past. To help build relationships with reporters and their editors, consider scheduling deskside briefings with them. This is where a communications representative can provide a general run-down of Cache County and let reporters know about priorities that matter to the county, and expertise the county could provide to stories. It also helps put a face to a name and helps the media know who to contact when they need an interview or information from the county.

4. **Train and Designate a Staff Member to Write Press Releases:** Streamlining the press release process to just one staff member managing press releases will ensure the writing and format is following industry standards (AP Style) and that it is written in a consistent voice for the county. The central communications person can work with departments and leadership to collect background info and quotes to draft the press release. They would then send it to the departments to provide a final review before distribution.

5. **Streamline the News Section on the Website:** Currently, the Cache County [news webpage](#) features both public notices and press releases. It is recommended to move public notices to its own section on the Cache County website and keep the news section featured on just press releases to help streamline the two different types of information.

6. **Establish a County-wide Communications Policy:** This ensures that all staff and elected officials know what to do if contacted by the media and help establish a point-of-contact for media for the county. It also lets them know who is the county spokesperson and sets the expectation for who is allowed to speak to the media. The communications policy should also specify where the official communication materials are housed, and staff policy on posting about the county on social media and other digital platforms.

7. **Add Salt Lake Media Contacts & Partners to the Press Release Distribution List:** Cache County can expand its list to more stakeholders who would be interested in staying updated on the county. This includes Salt Lake City major media outlets, (ABC4, KUTV2, FOX13, KSL5, Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News), which have large audiences and can showcase Cache County’s accomplishments statewide. When pitching an event or press conference to the general assignment desks of the Salt Lake broadcast stations, it is ideal to email the media advisory at least two days in advance, and around 8 a.m. on the day of the event before their staff meetings. It is also best practice to follow-up with a call to ensure they received the information. The official press release can be sent out immediately after the event.

For Salt Lake print publications, it is ideal to email the media advisory at least a week in advance for longer lead times. Pitching assignment desks is a good start, but it is also important to build relationships with individual reporters interested in Cache County and add them to the distribution list. Other contacts to consider adding include local partners’ communication point-of-contacts who could promote county news on their own channels such as Logan City, Utah State University and Cache County School District.

Examples of Additional Contacts for Press Release Distribution List

Organization	Name	E-Mail	Phone
ABC4	Assignment Desk	news@abc4.com	801-975-4401
FOX13	Assignment Desk	news@fox13now.com	801-536-1313
KSL5 / Deseret News	Assignment Desk	news@ksl.com	801-575-5600

KUTV2	Assignment Desk	newsdesk@kutv2.com	801-839-1222
Salt Lake Tribune	Assignment Desk	news@sltrib.com	801-257-8742
Logan City Communications	-	info@loganutah.org	435-716-9000
Utah State University Marketing & Communications	Emilie Wheeler, Communication Director	emilie.wheeler@usu.edu; ucom@usu.edu	435-797-0744
Cache County School District	Tim Smith, PIO	tim.smith@ccsdut.org; ccsd.info@ccsdut.org	435-994-0307

8. **Coordinate with Elected Officials on Branding Guidelines:** The media and general public are usually more responsive when they immediately recognize a trusted brand. Keep branding as a communications priority and be sure to include elected officials in the branding development process to get their opinion before finalizing any new brand. When the brand is implemented and used consistently and correctly by all county departments, it will help build trust with the media and recognition with the general public.

9. **Develop a Crisis Communications Plan:** Cache County needs to be ready with its communications plan in case of an emergency for the public’s health and safety. In working with the emergency manager in the Sheriff’s office, ensure that a public information officer is identified in case of a crisis. Also, lay out a plan for how to manage the logistics of an emergency press conference if needed. This ensures the county is organized and well-prepared to share information quickly and effectively to the media and public in an emergency.

10. **Develop Communications Outreach to Spanish-Speaking Residents:** Consider creating communication materials that reach out to Cache County residents who are Spanish speakers. Improve the accessibility to county services by increasing communication materials available in Spanish. This includes print materials such as brochures and fliers, and digital materials such as social posts and the website. For example, adding a Google Translate on the county’s website will make it accessible in Spanish and other prominent languages for web users.

11. **Delegate a Staff Member in Each Department to be a “Community Liaison”:** A community liaison would be responsible for managing communication outreach between their county department and the community. This could be a staff member or a volunteer who is delegated to be the community liaison for their department or program. They would be involved with more face-to-face interactions with the community, such as participating in city fairs at the county booth or making presentations to local community groups about the county’s services.

12. **Create a Position for a Communications Director / Manager:** Currently, Cache County’s staff and volunteers perform communication tasks as additional duties to their main roles and responsibilities. A Public Relations Advisory Committee also meets monthly that comprises staff and elected officials to help guide efforts. Each task on its own can be reasonably executed by

current staff members or the committee, however, an overall recommendation is to have a designated communications director /manager to be more effective in completing all the recommended communications tasks.

Analytics Dashboard of Traditional Media Efforts

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Press Releases Distributed	9 press releases	48 story leads, pitches, press releases, or blog posts
Contacts on Distribution List	10 contacts	50 contacts
Communications Policy	No policy	1 policy document
Crisis Communications Plan	No plan	1 plan

CATEGORY #2

Social Media

Current Situation Analysis

Cache County has the foundation of a robust and meaningful online presence through social media across its three main platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. All three platforms foster a relatively small, but strong core audience that engages with the county in a positive and uplifting way. Some elected officials and departments are also active on social media and are valuable contributors to sharing content.

Content featured on these platforms is generally helpful to its audience, from information on county office hours, press releases on important county news, ways to get involved as a resident, and more. Yet, there is more that can be done on social media to position the area as a diverse economic driver and connect more fully with the people of Cache County.

It is important to understand the role that social media management can play in connecting the county with its desired audiences. Effective social media efforts can break down communications barriers and instill a sense of community and transparency to the county. For Cache County, this will be key in shifting the public’s perception of the county from an agricultural community to a powerful economic catalyst. The following recommendations are ways that Cache County can deepen the connection with its stakeholders on social media.

Recommendations to Improve Social Media Efforts

1. **Well-Crafted Visuals Speak Louder Than Words:** Creativity is king on social media. Aesthetically-pleasing visuals make all the difference, and can provide legitimacy to the county, while also appealing to the audience. Currently, Cache County showcases press releases and other notices by sharing a screenshot of the page with a brief caption. By transforming posts like these into branded graphics and providing a link to the release in the caption, the content will look more visually appealing and professional, while also driving traffic to the county's website. There are some user-friendly social media graphic creation tools available, such as Canva, that the county could use if it is able to invest time in creating visual graphics for its platforms.
2. **Connect with the “Humans of Cache County”:** People use social media primarily to connect with other people. As an entity like Cache County, it can be a challenge to connect with an audience in a personalized way. One suggestion is to start a small campaign to feature the residents of Cache County. There are plenty of remarkable examples across social media that have implemented campaigns like this, with the award-winning “Humans of New York” as an example. Implementing this could be as simple as hiring a photographer or using an iPhone to go into the community and capture images of people as you interview them, then sharing that on social media. If this is too costly, then creating a Google Form in which residents can submit their brief stories, why they love Cache County, and some good photos, could also generate quality content. As a result, Cache County can feature more of the people within it and highlight the diversity of its residents to further improve its sense of community.
3. **Become a Strong Economic Voice on Twitter:** Cache County has a powerful economic presence in the state. It's time for people to know that. An exceptional way to elevate the county's voice in the legislative and policy scene is to utilize Twitter. Utah's legislators, economic drivers, and thought leaders interact on this social media platform using hashtags like #utpol and #utleg. Cache County is already *verified* on Twitter, which gives strong authority to content shared on the platform. By getting involved in these conversations on Twitter, tagging relevant entities and individuals, and taking control of the narrative about Cache County, organic engagement will surge and Cache County will become a strong economic voice on Twitter.
4. **It's All About Influencers:** Another way for a county to connect with its residents on social media is to collaborate with local influencers and engage with their already strong following. Cache County, specifically within Logan, has a number of influencers already popular on social media. These influencers range from college-aged students to mom bloggers and everything in between. Finding influencers would be helpful for Cache County to disseminate messaging, showcase new campaigns, or even share stories about why they live in the county. This is a great way to expand the county's reach and create genuine content with its community members.
5. **Let Small Business Be Heard:** On top of showing how Cache County has become a powerful economic catalyst in the state, let the voice of small businesses be heard by giving them a platform to show off what makes their business unique and why Cache County makes it possible for them to succeed. Similar to highlighting the people of the county, by showcasing small businesses the county can focus on how they affect their community and how their diverse perspectives improve the county. In addition, this creates personalized content that is genuine

and authentic to view, while also boosting the visibility of small businesses at a regional level. This can be accomplished by letting them do a brief Instagram/Facebook “takeover” of the county’s channel under supervision and approval of their posts. With more than 10,000 businesses in the county, this potentially long-lasting campaign can be coordinated with a Google Form sent to businesses to opt-in if they want to participate.

6. **TikTok - Embrace the College Scene:** Cache County is home to one of the biggest hubs for the college-aged demographic in the state, second only to Provo. To reach the 27,000 college students in Cache County, there is no better place than the primary social media platform of their choice – TikTok. With 800 million active users worldwide (41% of those users between ages 16 - 24) who use the app on average for 52 minutes every single day, the potential for organic engagement is massive. While most popular TikTok accounts have nothing to do with county government, there is still a way for Cache County to do well on this platform. For example, the [City of Minneapolis](#) has a very strong following on TikTok, and they mainly post about city updates and issues that face their residents. The trick? They do it in a way that is tailored to their audience: using a healthy dose of humor and jumping onto trends. Creating a TikTok account is free, and does not require a professional videographer. In fact, the more “DIY” it feels, the more engagement it will get. This could be an excellent and innovative way to reach a younger demographic, while still staying true to the Cache County brand.
7. **Tap Into Trends:** Always be on the lookout for fun, simple trends that Cache County can join while staying on brand and within reason. Whether this means generating quick, tasteful memes, using a popular hashtag like #throwbackthursday, or even hosting a social media challenge can all be great ways to increase engagement on social media platforms and give followers a reason to keep coming back to the county’s content.
8. **Build an Editorial Calendar:** As a government entity, Cache County has many ongoing items that happen each year that could be scheduled out in advance. This ensures that the information is not forgotten about and that residents are notified ahead of time. This could include council meeting reminders, seasonal road closures, county fair and rodeo, proclamations, Election Day voting information, etc.
9. **Use Hootsuite and Facebook Business Manager:** It is recommended to switch the Cache County Facebook page to a business manager account so it is no longer linked to staff’s personal accounts. This provides a universal login that any staff member can use to access the account rather than having to rely on a staff’s personal account. Hootsuite is another good way to connect all of the county’s social channels onto one platform and have one login to access all of them. It is also a resourceful tool for posting onto all channels at the same time.
10. **Best Time to Post:** For strategic announcements, post during a time in which the audience is most engaged online. This ensures that the greatest amount of the audience can be aware of the content and interact with it. According to best practice, the optimal times to post on Facebook are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday between 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. The optimal times to post on Instagram are Tuesday from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., and Monday through Friday at 11 a.m. The optimal times to

post on Twitter are Wednesday from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 9 – 11 a.m. However, if sharing news from an event or press conference, it is best to share it immediately as it happens as it is timely and the county wants to be the first to announce or share it.

11. **Post on County’s Accounts First:** It is recommended that all social media content is posted on the county’s channels first. This guides users back to the official source more effectively. After this, others can reshare from the official account onto their own personal accounts. There may be times when it is appropriate for others to post first, such as a specific executive message, and then have the county’s official accounts share it. With this recommendation in place, one post will be shared by several accounts rather than the same post posted on multiple accounts. This is ideal for engagement, as it allows the single post to accumulate a greater total of likes, retweets and comments that in turn makes it more likely to be shown to others.

Analytics Dashboard of Social Media Efforts

FACEBOOK

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Total Followers	3,300	5,000
Average Monthly Reach	1,575	6,500
Average Monthly Engagement	257	500

INSTAGRAM

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Total Followers	1,033	1,500
Average Monthly Reach	700	1200
Average Monthly Engagement	62	120

TWITTER

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Total Followers	2,504	3,000
Average Monthly Reach	4,000	7,000
Average Monthly Engagement Rate	2.5%	5.0%

CATEGORY #3

Website

Current Situation Analysis

Cache County's website is primarily service-oriented, a practical online resource for residents to access a variety of core aspects of the county. This ranges from information on paying property taxes to planning a trip to one of the many trails throughout the area. The website has a strong core audience that engages consistently with its top services. Content featured on the site is organized in accordance to its popularity, with a real-time ranking system in place that rearranges the homepage to first display the most-used services. The site is robust and secure, yet more could be done to build it into an appealing online destination for the people of Cache County and beyond.

Understanding the role that a robust and user-friendly website plays in improving the county's online presence is the first step in truly shifting public perception across all platforms. Effective website design can signal to the public that the county is a trusted government entity and prioritizes providing access to vital information and services. The web design and content is also key to showing that Cache County is a diverse economic catalyst in the state. The following recommendations are ways that the county can improve the design and functionality of its website.

Recommendations to Improve Website Efforts

1. **Delegate a Staff Member in Each Department to Consistently Update Web Content:** There is nothing more damaging to the credibility of a website than outdated and incorrect information. As of now, several complaints come in regularly from Cache County residents and internal personnel asking for current information from various departments featured on the website. Departments need to make sure their information, such as phone numbers and other data, is current and accurate on the website. This may involve delegating a staff member in each department to regularly update content within MODX, the website's content system. Even then, it typically is not a high priority for a department to update their information unless they are reminded to do so by a communications manager.
2. **Implement Calls to Action:** Websites need purpose to be effective. For Cache County, a lot of this purpose is service-driven. For example, guiding users to the online form for paying property taxes, maps to plan hiking trips, and current projects are all purposeful aspects of the site that can be made more prominent with a more user-friendly interface (UI). In addition to making popular information easier to find and use, additional calls to action can be added such as a simple email opt-in to subscribe to a regular newsletter, and to connect on social media. Also, offering more actions to "click here for more info" can drive the user to continue to explore the website and find what they need.
3. **Create a Visually Appealing Homepage:** For many, a visit to a website's homepage is their first and last interaction with an organization's online presence. Poor homepage design can turn people away very quickly. Cache County's homepage is very practical, yet it could develop more visually appealing, and even intuitive visuals, such as scroll banners and video content to draw in users and guide them to core site services. When laying out the homepage, set a goal to get web

users easily to the departments that can serve them and their needs from the homepage. To do this, put departments at the very top of the homepage and menu. Also, consider posting three to four current topics or news on the homepage for immediate timely updates. For a clean look, consider reducing the amount of info and separating it with more white space in the layout, and removing the pin and number of web hits in the preview boxes.

4. **Optimize Page Speed:** Slow page speed is another reason why users leave sites quickly. If something does not feel immediately responsive, people are not willing to go any further with that online interaction. Utilizing certified Google Lighthouse web developer tools, which are the industry standard, X-Factor identified the page speed and ran diagnostics on the cachecounty.org homepage among others. After running a core web vitals test, the desktop version of the site received a performance score of 89/100 as of February 7, 2022. [View Appendix II for the full report.](#) Metrics such as time to interact were not as high as they could be, scoring in the orange range rather than green. Suggestions to improve this performance score include avoiding network payloads, serving static assets with an efficient cache policy, and avoiding chaining critical requests. When implemented, these efforts can provide a faster web experience for users. For example, to reduce network payloads, combining and minifying all the Javascript files to shrink empty spaces and make the website load faster. As for serving static assets, look to set up the server differently and keep the following as static: images, Javascript files and stylesheet files.
5. **Make It Mobile Responsive:** Most website users access sites via their mobile devices. Make sure the website is optimized so that this experience is as rewarding and user-friendly as possible. After similarly running a diagnostic test on the mobile version of the site, a performance score of 77/100 was attained as of February 7, 2022. Suggestions to improve the mobile experience include efficiently encoding images, reducing unused CSS, and enabling text compression through zip files. Reducing data helps users who have less than optimal internet connections. A good goal would be to get to at least 90, which can be achieved by following the suggestions from this diagnostic. [View Appendix II for the full report.](#)
6. **Back Up Your Aesthetic with Data:** All website modification decisions should be made with data in mind. Refer to data from Google Analytics to determine how to change pages and rearrange aspects of the site. For example, take a look at the most viewed pages and see why they are used the most. Aspects of these pages can be implemented on others that are not as frequented. Heat maps of the homepage can also be a resource in identifying how users are actually moving their mouse across the page, which can allow the county to place content in areas that are more frequented and intuitive.
7. **Gather Input from Users on New Website:** A valuable way to find out what aspects of the county's new website work versus aspects that do not work as well is to send out a brief survey to residents. Collecting primary data and anecdotes from actual users provides a nuanced and accurate perspective on how the site can improve to serve the needs of its audience.
8. **Add a Google Translate Button on the Website:** Adding a Google Translate on Cache County's website will make it accessible in Spanish and other prominent languages for residents. This will

also help the county’s overall efforts of communicating and informing residents whose first language is not English.

- Ensure the Website is 508 Compliant (ADA Accessibility):** Make sure the Cache County website is 508 compliant and accessible for web users who have a disability. [Section 508](#) is the governing principle that requires all government information to be accessible to users with disabilities. This includes alt text on images for screen readers to read out loud to users who are blind, and adding captions on videos for users who are deaf or hard of hearing. Cache County can run an accessibility test to ensure their webpages and applications are 508 compliant through a web accessibility evaluation service such as the [WAVE Tool](#) or [PopeTech](#).

Analytics Dashboard of Website

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Website Visits	856,249	1,000,000
Average Time on Site	1.18 min.	Greater than or equal to 2.10 min.
Average Bounce Rate	55.54%	Less than or equal to 50.00%
Most Viewed Pages	Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
1. cachecounty.org/gis/property-/-parcel-viewer.html	1. 117,727	1. 310.83 sec
2. cachecounty.org	2. 103,955	2. 27.77 sec
3. cachecounty.org/fair	3. 33,191	3. 47.36 sec
4. cachecounty.org/gis	4. 32,582	4. 21.43 sec
5. cachecounty.org/fair/tickets.html	5. 32,263	5. 156.35 sec
6. cachecounty.org/departments.html	6. 24,507	6. 26.84 sec
7. cachecounty.org/fairgrounds	7. 22,859	7. 148.11 sec
8. cachecounty.org/elections/2021-elections.html	8. 21,352	8. 79.03 sec
9. cachecounty.org/recorder	9. 17,772	9. 94.28 sec
10. cachecounty.org/fair/schedule.html	10. 16,426	10. 90.65 sec

CATEGORY #4

Direct Mail & Newsletter

Current Situation Analysis

Currently, Cache County does not send out a printed newsletter or any direct mail piece such as a postcard or brochure to promote its county-wide services, programs and news. There are some efforts made by the county’s senior center, which prints out a newsletter and distributes them at their facility to those who participate in their programs, which is approximately 600 individuals. Providing county news via mail is a way to help break through the digital noise and reach residents who may not be internet users.

Although many receive their news through digital outlets, there is still value in providing a printed version of Cache County’s news. Many residents continue to receive their news through print if they do not have internet access and if they are age 65 or older. Approximately 12% of Cache County’s residents do not have broadband internet at home and 10% of the population are aged 65 or older, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

There is an opportunity to provide county-wide news via mail through either an insert in the current utility bill mailers, which are sent to 1,100 households, or by creating a separate mailer and sending it through the USPS mailing system. The most cost effective option may be doing an insert in the current utility bill mailers, however, it may exclude households who are not receiving utility services through the county and are not on the mailing list.

Recommendations to Improve Direct Mail & Newsletter Efforts

1. **Include a Newsletter Insert in the Utility Bill Mailer:** Since the county is already mailing a monthly utility bill to residents, it would be easy and cost effective to add a one-sheet newsletter insert with the bill. Time investment would include someone managing the editorial calendar, curating content by gathering information from staff, writing the newsletter, finding images, making graphics, laying out the design and working with a printer. To simplify the process, the same company that prints the utility bill could also print the newsletter. They can insert both into the envelope at the same time rather than wait for another printer to deliver the insert.
2. **Create a Quarterly County Newsletter as a Standalone Mailer:** An option that would stand out in resident’s mailboxes would be a print newsletter that is mailed out as its own piece and not in an envelope. This would allow for a bigger newsletter to include more information and images. As for timing, a quarterly newsletter would allow enough time in between issues for staff to produce the next newsletter. As for printing and mailing, it is recommended to select a printer who can print the newsletter and handle the mailing. Printing costs depend on the number of pages, paper type, and if it is printed in color. The printing cost range is usually between \$0.12 to \$0.20 per piece. To help estimate quantities and postage costs, [USPS’s EDDM Tool](#) can be used and can even be narrowed to specific demographics such as age, household size and income. As of January 2022, below are the residential units (print quantities) and postage costs for Cache County’s 10 largest cities.

Top 10 Largest Cities in Cache County (Print Quantities and Postage Costs)

City	Residential Units (Print quantities)	Approximate Postage Cost (All mailing routes)
Logan	17,298	\$3,460
Smithfield	5,065	\$1,013
North Logan	9,277	\$1,855
Hyrum	3,246	\$649

Providence	3,038	\$608
Nibley	1,976	\$375
Wellsville	1,851	\$370
Hyde Park	1,731	\$346
Richmond	1,077	\$217
Millville	728	\$146
TOTAL	45,287	\$9,039

- Partner With Cities to Share Mailer Cost:** It could be costly for Cache County to print and mail a newsletter on its own. To help reduce the cost, the county could form partnerships with towns within its county to share the cost. In return, towns could have their own section of the newsletter where they can put in their own news of their choosing.
- Utilize Existing City Newsletters and Communication Channels:** Some cities may already have their own newsletter and communication channels that Cache County could be a part of instead of creating something new. Create a list of external partners and communication point-of-contacts to coordinate submissions to their newsletters and other channels.
- Consider Direct Mail Postcards to Promote Events/Programs:** In addition to a print newsletter, the county could also send out periodic postcards to promote their events or programs as one-time promotional pieces. This is recommended for any major happenings or messages the county wants to ensure gets more attention from residents.
- Expand the Senior Center Newsletter List:** Using [USPS's EDDM Tool](#), the county can filter the mailing routes by percentage of residents age 65+ on the mailing route. Sending the newsletter to more seniors in the county may promote the senior center services and motivate more to participate there. Below is a list of mailing routes with the highest percentages in the 65+ age group.

Mailing Routes With 50% or More who are 65+ Residents

Town (Mailing route code)	Residential Units (Print quantities)	Approximate Postage Cost (All mailing routes)	Percent of Residents Age 65+ on Route
North Logan (84341-C020)	535	\$107	62%
Logan (84321-C025)	438	\$88	60%
North Logan (84341-C015)	504	\$101	57%

Providence (84332-R001)	616	\$123	53%
Logan (84321-C012)	525	\$105	53%
Logan (84321-C021)	520	\$104	53%
Providence (84332-R004)	623	\$125	52%
North Logan (84341-C016)	486	\$97	52%
TOTAL	4,247	\$850	-

Analytics Dashboard of Direct Mail / Newsletters

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Senior Center Newsletter Recipients	600 in-person recipients	4,847 recipients
Utility Bill Mailers	1,100 mailers	-
Households Receiving County Newsletter	No households	1,100 recipients
Postcard Mailers	No postcard mailers	4 postcard mailers

CATEGORY #5

E-Newsletter

Current Situation Analysis

Cache County currently does not send out an e-newsletter about county updates and news to residents or businesses. This is an opportunity for Cache County to expand its digital communication efforts by implementing a consistent e-newsletter to its audiences. It is recommended to send out at least a bi-monthly e-newsletter to residents, and to consider a second bi-monthly e-newsletter to businesses.

The e-newsletter to residents can feature four to five major highlights of the county such as new economic developments, upcoming events, property tax reminders, firework restrictions, road closures, vote registrations, and more. These can be brief teasers in the e-newsletter with a button linked to the Cache County website for more information. This will make Cache County the main source of information and will start directing residents to look toward the county first for information rather than any other source.

The e-newsletter to businesses can be tailored to provide business licensing information, local and state business grants and support, the status of the pandemic on the economy, employment data and other

resources. This will position Cache County as an entity that is looking out for its businesses and position itself as a knowledgeable economic leader in the business community.

Recommendations to Improve E-Newsletter Efforts

1. **Create a Residential Email List From Various Departments:** The county already collects contact information from residents through various platforms such as for utility billing, Reverse 911, the tax roll system and voter registrations. All county departments may also have their own email lists that they could contribute to the county-wide e-newsletter list. Resident emails can be compiled and put into an email marketing software system, such as MailChimp, to begin sending out e-newsletters. It is recommended to work with the county's legal team for logistics and language, such as providing an opt-out provision and accompanying language such as "You have received this email because you have contacted the county via [county service]."
2. **Create a Business Email List From Business Licensing:** If the business licensing department collects emails as part of the licensing process, then this is the go-to resource to use to create an e-newsletter specifically targeting Cache County businesses. Reaching out to the business community is a way to provide important economic and business-related information and to build relationships and develop Cache County as an economic driver in the community.
3. **Partner with the Local Chamber of Commerce to Provide E-Newsletter Content:** Since the county is part of the Cache Valley Chamber of Commerce, they can build a partnership to provide regular county content for the chamber's e-newsletter. This would easily reach the county's business leaders without the county having to build a new e-mail list or e-newsletter.
4. **Add a Prominent Subscribe Button to the Website:** Another resourceful way to collect emails from those who want more information from the county is by featuring a prominent subscribe button on the website. Typically, subscribe buttons are seen in the footer of the website so it is displayed on every webpage. MailChimp provides a simple embedded code that a web manager can insert on the backend to automatically populate the email list when someone subscribes online.
5. **Use a User-Friendly Platform such as MailChimp:** Once the county has curated its email list, then it is ready to begin creating an e-newsletter. A recommended platform is MailChimp for its user-friendly interface, mobile-friendly email designs, and analytics capabilities. The county will need to import the audience and create an email template within the system. Common practice is to keep it relatively simple such as a one-column layout with an image, a brief description and a button linking to more information in each news section. The system allows a user to send a test email to be reviewed before officially sending the email to the entire list. After sending an email, MailChimp provides in-depth analytics of who opened it, what they clicked on, and any bounces from emails. This helps the county clean its email list and also be able to gauge the type of news that was most interesting to the audience.

6. **Create an Editorial Calendar for E-newsletter Content:** To stay on track with a bi-monthly e-newsletter, it is important to plan ahead and create an editorial calendar. When ideas of what to promote in the email comes up, they can be added to the editorial calendar ahead of time. When a staff member is ready to create the e-newsletter, they can easily see an already-made list of ideas to pull from for that time of the year.

Analytics Dashboard of E-Newsletters

Efforts	2021 Baseline	2022 Suggested Goal
Utility Bill Email Addresses	1,100 emails	-
E-Newsletter to Residents	No resident e-newsletter	1 bi-monthly e-newsletter
E-Newsletter to Businesses	No business e-newsletter	1 bi-monthly e-newsletter

Conclusion

As Cache County enters 2022, now is an opportune time to plan communication efforts for the year and prioritize increasing communications with residents, businesses and external stakeholders. A multi-faceted approach as outlined in the audit’s recommendations would significantly help Cache County position itself as a competent government entity that cares about informing its residents. It would also help county residents feel part of a community and improve its perception with external stakeholders interested in partnership opportunities.

Suggested next steps is for the county to determine the recommended communication efforts to focus on for the year and designate those responsibilities to staff members in each department to serve as communications liaisons. This will help ensure these recommendations are implemented at a department level. It is strongly recommended that the county eventually hires a communications director or manager to provide a streamlined communications process for the entire county.

Since the audit’s recommendations are mostly geared toward the tactical side of communications, it is recommended that this audit is used as a foundation to develop a strategic communications plan. This will fully outline the county’s communications efforts with goals, objectives, audiences, messaging, strategies and tactics.

Cache County has a solid foundation for communications and has an opportunity to build upon current efforts. As the county prioritizes further communication efforts, it will meet its overarching vision of being

seen as a competent and responsible government entity that is concerned about informing its residents. In addition, the county’s communication efforts will support its reputation as an economic leader in the state and will help build a strong sense of community among its residents.

APPENDIX I : 2022 Implementation Timeline

Below is a suggested high-level implementation timeline with all the recommendations organized by category and month of implementation. It is recommended to use a project management software to keep track of all the communications tasks, especially if multiple communication liaisons from a variety of departments are involved. [View an example of this implementation timeline in Asana](#), a popular project management software option.

MARCH

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news
- Create a media kit and add a boilerplate to press releases
- Train and designate a staff member to write press releases
- Establish a county-wide communications policy
- Add Salt Lake media contacts & partners to the press release distribution list

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Become a strong economic voice on Twitter
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for April’s posts)
- Use Hootsuite and Facebook business manager (post on county’s accounts first)

Website

- Delegate a staff member in each department to consistently update web content
- Optimize page speed
- Make It mobile responsive
- Add a Google Translate button on the website
- Ensure the website is 508 compliant (ADA accessibility)

Direct Mail & Newsletter

- Include a newsletter insert in the utility bill mailer **OR**
Create a standalone county newsletter mailer
- Partner with cities to share mailer cost (if doing a standalone newsletter mailer)
- Utilize existing city newsletters and communication channels

E-Newsletter

- Create a residential email list from various departments (consult with legal)
- Add a prominent subscribe button to the website
- Use a user-friendly platform such as MailChimp
- Create an editorial calendar for e-newsletter content
- Send bi-monthly resident e-newsletter

APRIL

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news
- Delegate a staff member in each department to be a “community liaison”
- Streamline the news section on the website

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for May’s posts)

Website

- Implement calls to action
- Create a visually appealing homepage with news features at top
- Back up your aesthetic with data
- Gather input from users on new website

Direct Mail & Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)

E-Newsletter

- Create a business email list from business licensing
- Partner with the local chamber to provide regular content to businesses
- Send bi-monthly business e-newsletter

MAY

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news
- Develop a crisis communications plan
- Develop communications outreach to Spanish-speaking residents

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for June's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly resident e-newsletter

JUNE

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news
- Coordinate with elected officials on branding guidelines

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Connect with the "Humans of Cache County" (June's Campaign)
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for July's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Consider direct mail postcards to promote events/programs (e.g. county fair)
- Expand the senior center newsletter list
- Send bi-monthly business e-newsletter

JULY

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news
- Create a position for a communications director / manager

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Tap into the monthly social trends

- Build an editorial calendar (plan for August's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly resident e-newsletter

AUGUST

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Join TikTok - Embrace the college scene (Back-to-school campaign)
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for September's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly business e-newsletter

SEPTEMBER

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for October's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly resident e-newsletter

OCTOBER

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Connect with local social influencers to take over county's accounts (October's campaign)
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for November's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly business e-newsletter

NOVEMBER

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news

Social Media

- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for December's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly resident e-newsletter

DECEMBER

Traditional Media & Communications

- Proactively share positive news

Social Media

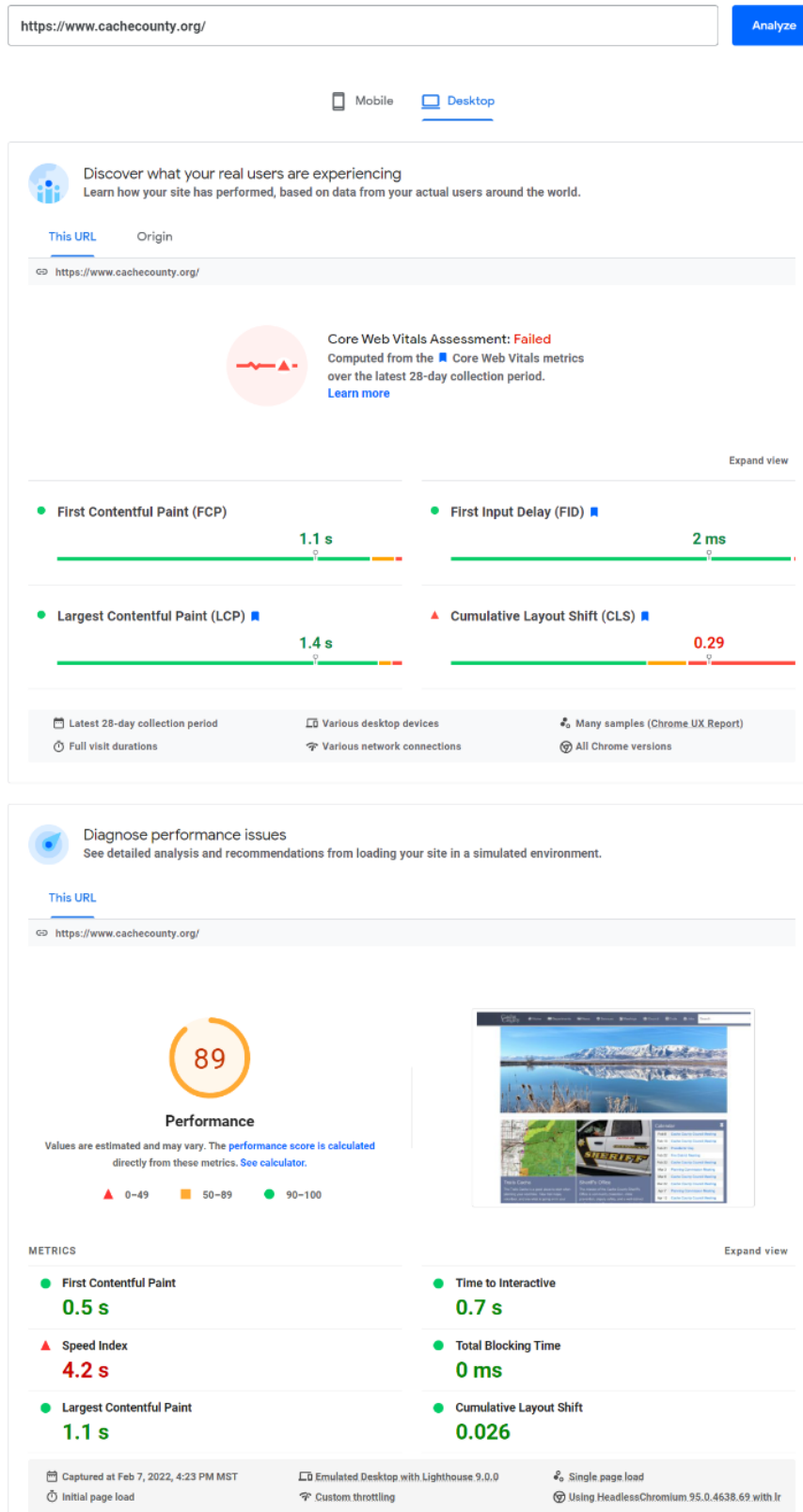
- Create well-crafted visuals for social media posts
- Post during optimal times for each social platform
- Small business features (December's campaign)
- Tap into the monthly social trends
- Build an editorial calendar (plan for January's posts)

Direct Mail & Newsletter / E-Newsletter

- Send printed monthly newsletter (through utility bill mailer or standalone mailer)
- Send bi-monthly business e-newsletter

APPENDIX II : Website Page Speed Report

Desktop Speed Report from Google's PageSpeed Insights



Desktop Speed Report of cachecounty.org (continued)

Show audits relevant to: **All** FCP TBT LCP CLS

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity	Estimated Savings
▲ Serve images in next-gen formats	3.68 s
▲ Properly size images	1.4 s
▲ Efficiently encode images	1.32 s
▲ Reduce initial server response time	0.8 s
■ Eliminate render-blocking resources	0.26 s
■ Reduce unused CSS	0.16 s
■ Enable text compression	0.16 s

These suggestions can help your page load faster. They don't **directly affect** the Performance score.

DIAGNOSTICS

- ▲ Serve static assets with an efficient cache policy — 29 resources found
- ▲ Image elements do not have explicit width and height
- ▲ Avoid enormous network payloads — Total size was 5,789 KiB
- Avoid chaining critical requests — 7 chains found
- Keep request counts low and transfer sizes small — 35 requests • 5,789 KiB
- Largest Contentful Paint element — 1 element found

Mobile Speed Report from Google's PageSpeed Insights

https://www.cachecounty.org/ Analyze

Mobile Desktop

Discover what your real users are experiencing
Learn how your site has performed, based on data from your actual users around the world.

[This URL](#) [Origin](#)

https://www.cachecounty.org/

Core Web Vitals Assessment: Failed
Computed from the Core Web Vitals metrics over the latest 28-day collection period.
[Learn more](#)

Expand view

● First Contentful Paint (FCP)	1.3 s	● First Input Delay (FID)	10 ms
● Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)	2.1 s	■ Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)	0.24


Latest 28-day collection period Various mobile devices Many samples (Chrome UX Report)
Full visit durations Various network connections All Chrome versions

Mobile Speed Report of cachecounty.org (continued)

Diagnose performance issues
See detailed analysis and recommendations from loading your site in a simulated environment.

[This URL](#)

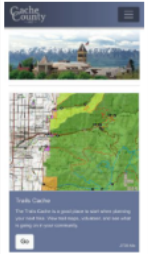
https://www.cachecounty.org/



Performance

Values are estimated and may vary. The performance score is calculated directly from these metrics. [See calculator.](#)

▲ 0-49 ■ 50-89 ● 90-100




METRICS Expand view

<p>■ First Contentful Paint</p> <p>2.0 s</p>	<p>■ Time to Interactive</p> <p>4.2 s</p>
<p>▲ Speed Index</p> <p>6.2 s</p>	<p>● Total Blocking Time</p> <p>150 ms</p>
<p>▲ Largest Contentful Paint</p> <p>4.1 s</p>	<p>● Cumulative Layout Shift</p> <p>0</p>

Captured at Feb 7, 2022, 4:23 PM MST Emulated Moto G4 with Lighthouse 9.0.0 Single page load
Initial page load Slow 4G throttling Using HeadlessChromium 95.0.4638.69 with Ir

[View Treemap](#)



Show audits relevant to: All FCP TBT LCP CLS

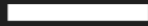
OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity	Estimated Savings
▲ Serve images in next-gen formats	22.2 s
▲ Efficiently encode images	8.1 s
▲ Reduce unused CSS	1.05 s
▲ Eliminate render-blocking resources	1.05 s
▲ Enable text compression	0.9 s
▲ Reduce initial server response time	0.87 s
■ Properly size images	0.15 s
■ Reduce unused JavaScript	0.15 s

These suggestions can help your page load faster. They don't directly affect the Performance score.

DIAGNOSTICS

▲ Serve static assets with an efficient cache policy — 29 resources found
▲ Image elements do not have explicit width and height
▲ Avoid enormous network payloads — Total size was 5,789 KIB
■ First Contentful Paint (3G) — 3990 ms



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**COMMUNICATIONS
AUDIT
2022**

**PREPARED FOR:
CACHE COUNTY**