

SKY VIEWS HELP RAMSEY COUNTY KEEP TABS ON ITS BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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Ramsey County is the smallest county by area in Minnesota, yet it's the second largest in population with over half a million residents. Centered in St Paul—Minnesota's second largest city—Ramsey County is largely developed and urbanized, comprised of older suburbs and newer areas which are constantly expanding. Ramsey County has some of the most diverse demographics in Minnesota, with long established Black and Hispanic populations, along with more recent immigrant populations from Southeast Asia and East Africa.

Like other counties, Ramsey maintains a wide variety of functions for the community across a multitude of operating departments; including Public Works, Parks and Recreation,

Environmental Services, Assessors Office and Emergency Communications. All of these departments are developing an increasing appetite for consistent aerial imagery, as past solutions were relying on lower quality imagery from a variety of sources.

Since Ramsey County began working with Nearmap, it has been able to bring together more than 170 users across its workforce into a single, regularly updated resource to meet both shared and non-overlapping departmental needs.

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THE CHALLENGE

“One of the roles in my position with the county is to help plan strategically for acquiring and maintaining access to aerial imagery resources for the use of our various departments” said Geoff Maas, the county’s Geospatial Business Analyst.

Ramsey County has now been working with Nearmap for several years. Maas cited that “the quality of Nearmap’s imagery, combined with its updates occurring more than once per year are of enormous benefit to a variety of our uses and applications. The imagery helps provide a consistent and common operating picture across our departments” and that “the ease of setting up users across the county with a Nearmap account is a real plus”.

He went on to extol the benefits of the highly intuitive user interface as an “enormous selling point which makes our work more efficient and our uses apt to return to it again and again.”

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Maas says the various tools and functionality offered by Nearmap are of enormous practical use for day-to-day work. One example includes leveraging the continually updated imagery in Nearmap to improve maps and enhance staff’s knowledge of parking lots, building footprints and fixture locations. This aids in a range of work from property valuation in the Assessor’s Office, to the emergency communications staff who need up-to-date information on everything from roadway alignments to new telecommunication tower locations.

The county’s Attorney’s Office has also embraced Nearmap imagery for preparing exhibits and displays to assist with court cases. Maas said, “If for example, we have a traffic case that occurred in July of last year, we can use Nearmap’s date-stamped imagery to prepare an exhibit close to the original conditions of when the event in question took place.”

Departments focused on environmental work are also making use of Nearmap imagery to conduct seasonal comparisons of water features and vegetation cover. Staff can access historical data from an April image and compare it to one from July and again later in the year. This allows them to view the extent and impact of algal blooms or helps to determine if flooding events have changed a watercourse or impacted water levels appreciably in the county’s lakes.

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Geoff Maas, Geospatial Business Analyst,
Ramsey County



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BUSINESS IMPACT

Ramsey County GIS staff and users integrate Nearnmap imagery into commercial GIS software, such as Esri's ArcGIS Collector and Survey 123. Since Nearnmap is an Esri Gold Partner, this integration has been seamless for county staff, but Maas also notes that Nearnmap as a stand-alone application is becoming popular. "The ease-of-use of the various tools built into Nearnmap is consistently a big plus, particularly the navigation, the tools for measurement and area calculation; it is really easy and intuitive for someone with literally no training or experience in GIS to log on and within minutes be able to make use of the tools, this has been really helpful."

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the nature of work across the United States, and Ramsey County utilized Nearnmap to keep its workforce going. With many staff

working from home, various departments were less able to deploy personnel for field inspections, measurement taking, or to perform property value assessments. Nearnmap helped staff to work remotely, remain safe, reduce travel and fuel expenses, and perform many of their work tasks directly from their desktop.

"Being able to rapidly set up our staff members with access to Nearnmap to perform virtual assessments, measurements, visual inspections and so forth so they wouldn't have to be physically travelling around the county during the pandemic helped keep us not only working, but getting things done really efficiently" Maas reports.

Ramsey County is effectively leveraging the quality imagery, intuitive design and increased efficiency provided by the Nearnmap platform to enhance its daily workflows and to improve the lives of the county's residents.

ABOUT NEARMAP

Global technology pioneer Nearmap provides easy, instant access to up-to-date and historic geospatial data that organizations depend on as their source of truth for the livable world.

Nearmap proactively captures wide-scale urban areas in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand multiple times each year, with patented plane-mounted camera systems that provide superior detail, and automated processing pipeline that ensures rapid availability.

Regular surveys cover 71% of the US population—over 430 urban areas encompassing more than 330,000 square miles annually, with major metros frequently captured up to 4x per year.

Customers rely on Nearmap for consistent, high-quality content that enables remote capabilities and unlocks productivity for profound change: crystal-clear high-resolution vertical, oblique and panoramic aerial imagery; a vast library of historic captures; frequently updated city-scale 3D datasets on demand; and verified pre-processed property insights at unmatched scale with Nearmap AI.

Founded in 2007, Nearmap was named as one of the world's 10 Most Innovative Companies of 2020 by Fast Company magazine. With offices in the United States and Australia, Nearmap has a global customer base including government agencies and enterprises for whom current, reliable and truthful data is essential to critical decision making and operational workflows.

Nearmap's parent company, Nearmap Limited, is a publicly traded company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange and one of the 200 largest ASX-listed stocks in Australia.



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