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City of Florence Introduces AI-Powered Chatbot "Cypress" to Enhance Civic Engagement

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FLORENCE, SC – The City of Florence announces the launch of its new customer service platform, Cypress. Cypress includes an accessible web chat assistant on the City's website and a text message feature. It was launched in partnership with [Citibot](#), a leading provider of interactive chat solutions for local government.

With Cypress, City of Florence customers can quickly and easily get answers to their questions, find information on various city services, submit service requests, send a message to staff, or sign up for text message notifications. The platform was developed with the latest AI-driven chatbot technology, allowing the city to automate its customer service efforts by enhancing communications with customers, and creating a more efficient and streamlined process for monitoring customers' needs.

Cypress's web chat service can be found on the city's website (www.cityofflorence.com) where both desktop and mobile users will notice the feature on the bottom right section of their browser window. Clicking on the icon launches a chat window, greeting users and prompting them to enter their questions or service requests.

To start a conversation via text message, customers can text "Hey Cy" to (855) 964-3929. Cy immediately responds with a short greeting explaining the ways the service can be used and a link to sign up for text message notifications.

If at any time during the interaction a Florence resident needs assistance or help from City staff, they can send in a message with Cypress and the appropriate staff member will follow up with them during working hours.

Cypress is NOT to be used for emergencies or to report criminal activity. If you are experiencing an emergency, call 9-1-1. The city continues to encourage customers that if they are experiencing a water or sewer issue, to call their public works and utilities department directly at (843) 665-3236. Requests sent through the bot are not monitored 24/7 by city staff, whereas after hours calls for Police, Public Works, and Utilities are directed to City Police dispatch who are able to direct calls as needed to on call personnel.

City Manager Scotty Davis emphasized the platform's role in enhancing transparency and community engagement stating, "Cypress brings city services closer to our customers, streamlining interactions with local government. This marks a significant step forward in our commitment to accessibility and responsiveness."

Based in Charleston, SC, Citibot LLC was formed in 2016 with a mission of making cities and counties accessible for all. Bratton Riley, Citibot's co-founder and CEO, was inspired by the evolution of the conversational chatbot and its ability to help governments be more accessible and accountable to every resident.

"People's expectations of high-quality customer service are ever-increasing," said Riley. "Cities like Florence are leading the way by delivering powerful solutions to maximize efficiency and enhance access to information and vital services."

For more information on how Florence is using Citibot, visit <https://www.cityofflorence.com/meet-cypress>.

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