

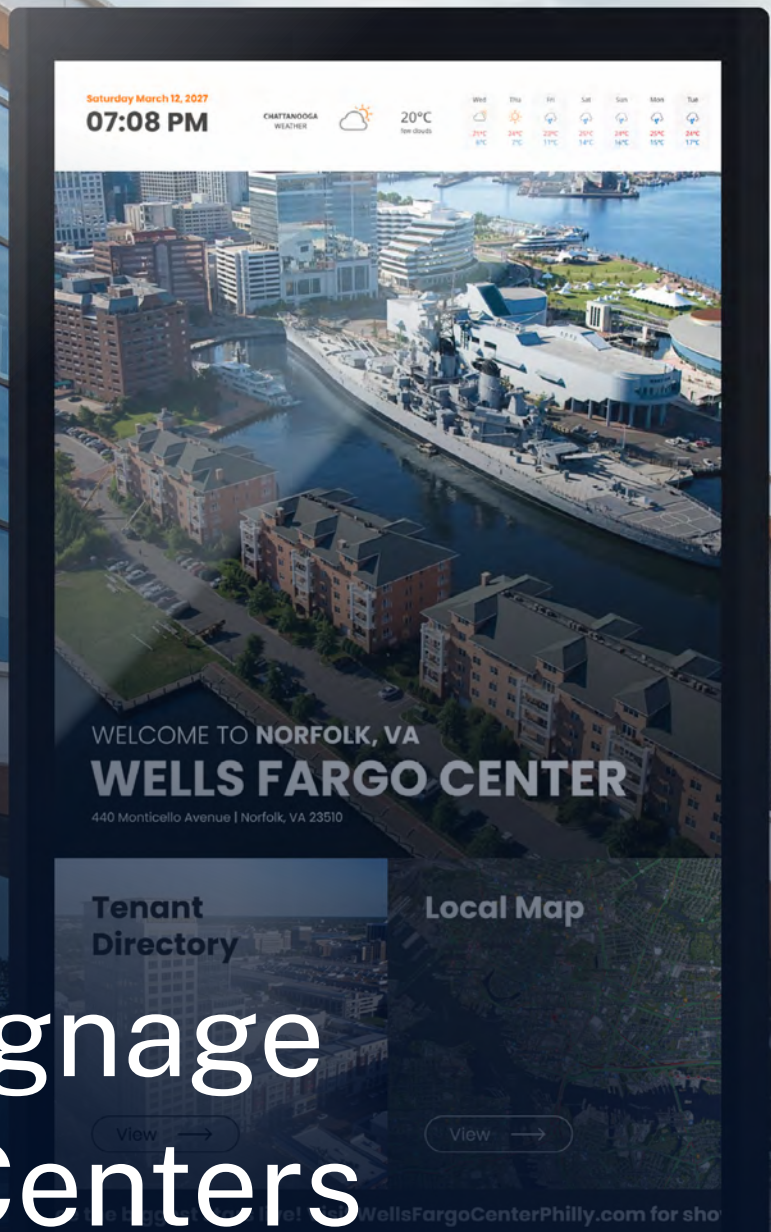


WHITE PAPER

Digital Signage for REC Centers

Screens that Serve: A Practical Guide to Display
Screens and Interactive Displays for Recreation Centers

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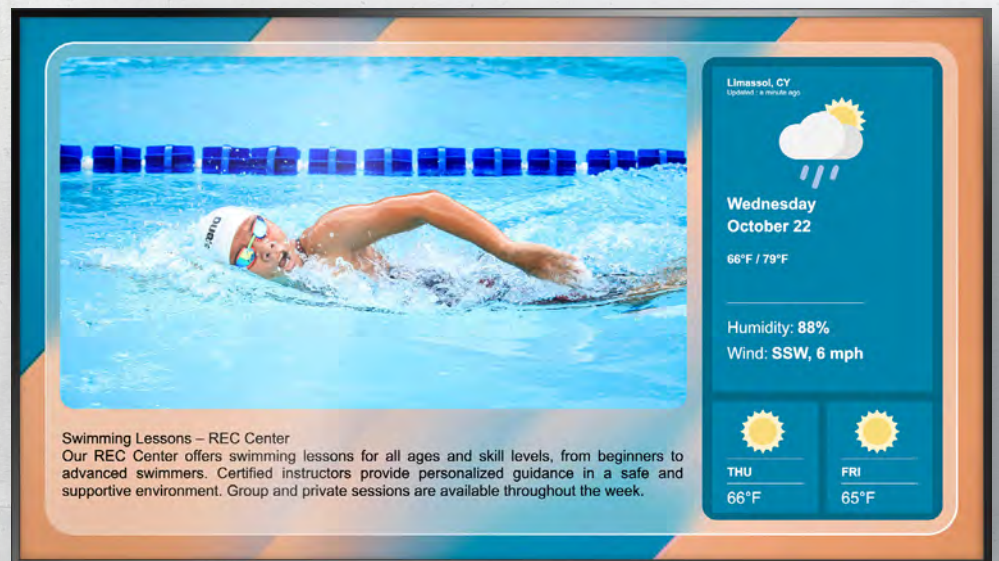
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Getting Started

Recreation centers are hubs of community life—swim lessons at 6 a.m., youth basketball at 5 p.m., pickleball all day, seniors' yoga on Tuesdays, camps in the summer, and emergency shelter duty when the community needs it. Yet too many centers still depend on taped flyers, dry-erase boards, emailed PDFs that nobody opens in time, and front-desk staff repeating the same directions 100 times a day. The result? Confusion at the door, missed programs, staff burnout, and a steady trickle of preventable complaints: “No one told me the pool was closed”, “Where’s court 3?”, “I never saw the registration deadline”.

This article is a field-tested, action-focused guide for center directors, IT/network administrators, and operations managers who want to modernize communications with Signage Screens, Interactive Displays, and centrally managed Signage Displays. You'll find realistic adoption numbers, ROI ranges, a step-by-step implementation plan, stakeholder roles, total cost of ownership (TCO) guidance, and proven examples from recreation and community organizations—including how Mvix has powered multi-site parks & recreation networks over the past 20 years.





Analog Communication Can't Keep Up

Consider a typical weekday:

- The aquatics team switches lanes for lap swim at 11:30 a.m., then a lifeguard training blocks lanes at 12:00 p.m.
- Two youth leagues share adjacent gyms; game times shift when a coach calls out.
- A seniors' ceramics class is relocated because of an HVAC maintenance window.
- The center is short-staffed at the front desk; new visitors need a map, a class list, and a way to pay or register.

In a paper-based world, each change triggers a cascade of manual updates (print, tape, post,

repeat). Front-desk staff become human routers, fielding the same questions; program staff scramble to notify participants; visitors miss updates and feel lost. Morale and trust suffer.

Display Screens address these pain points by centralizing updates and pushing the right information—room changes, lane status, live schedules, closures, maps, alerts—onto Signage Screens where people actually look: the front lobby, outside studios, near pools and rinks, in hallways, and on portable kiosks at pop-up events. Interactive directories and wayfinding tools reduce line pressure at the desk, while back-of-house staff displays keep teams aligned on safety, SOPs, and shift updates.

Adoption Snapshot & What's Emerging

There is no single census that reports “what percent of recreation centers use digital signage,” but we can triangulate from reliable public-sector data and adjacent sectors:

10,000+
locations

89%
printing

11
DS locations

- The **National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)** notes there are **10,000+ local park and recreation agencies** in the U.S., many operating community and recreation centers as core facilities.
- NRPA's Marketing & Communications research shows agencies devote limited budgets to outreach and still rely heavily on **posters/flyers in facilities (89%)**, indicating significant headroom for on-premise digital channels.
- Case studies across government and nonprofit venues (libraries, community services, municipal centers, **YMCA**s) document expanding deployments of **Signage Displays** and interactive kiosks to replace bulletin boards, unify messaging, and coordinate multi-site operations. Examples include Loudoun County Parks, Recreation & Community Services (PRCS), a county-wide network across 11 locations, and additional municipal deployments.

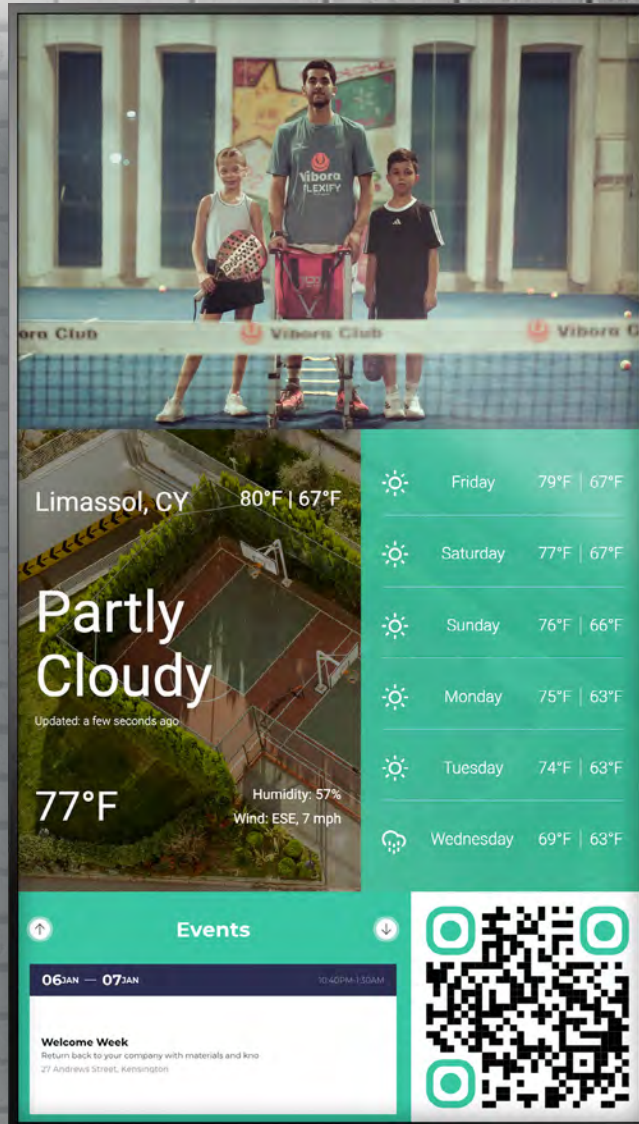


Interpreting the data:

- Public REC centers are **mid-adoption**: many have piloted screens at central lobbies, with growth into wayfinding, aquatics, and gyms. Given NRPA's continuing reliance on print inside facilities and the steady stream of municipal case studies, a **conservative directional estimate** is that **roughly one-third to approaching half of public rec centers** now use at least one **Signage Screen**, with multi-building and multi-site networks growing each budget cycle. (No authoritative national percentage is published; this is an evidence-based directional view grounded in NRPA communications patterns and public case studies.)
- Private facilities (e.g., YMCAs, JCCs, health clubs) tend to adopt earlier, driven by membership engagement and programming needs; numerous YMCA case studies show transitions from bulletin boards to **Display Screens** for schedules and alerts.



NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION



Quantified Benefits & ROI You Can Defend

While every site differs, four benefit categories consistently show up in research and case work:

1. Reach, Recall, and Action

Digital displays are noticed and remembered. Industry analyses (drawing on OAAA-cited research) put **message recall around ~80%** for digital out-of-home, far above static print boards. That translates to more people showing up on time, at the right place, with the right gear.

2. Wayfinding & Wait-time Perception

Queue and wayfinding displays can **reduce perceived wait times by ~35%**, a major factor for aquatics and front-desk lines—particularly during after-school and weekend peaks.

3. Operational Savings

Replacing printed materials cuts recurring costs (paper, toner, labor). One community case study reported **~25% lower operational costs** after replacing bulletin boards with **Signage Displays**—a pattern we see echoed across public venues that move to digital workflows.

4. Fewer Errors, Faster Response

A centralized CMS lets staff correct a wrong room, update a canceled class, or post an emergency closure **in minutes** across all screens—preventing dozens (or hundreds) of visitor misroutes. Loudoun County PRCS used this to synchronize local and county-wide content while empowering site managers to control their own feeds.

Macro Trend: The global market for **Signage Displays** continues to grow at **~6–8% CAGR**, signaling mainstream adoption and more affordable hardware/software stacks—important for public budgets.





Where Screens Make the Biggest Difference in a REC Center

- **Front-of-House Lobby Hub:** Rotating class schedules, facility hours, membership promos, safety notices, event spotlights, scholarship info, and alerts.
- **Wayfinding & Directories:** Interactive displays help visitors find rooms, courts, pools, childcare, and accessible routes; they reduce “where do I go?” line pressure.
- **Aquatics & Ice:** Lane status, lifeguard postings, class rosters, closures, and real-time safety alerts.
- **Gymnasiums & Studios:** Court assignments, game clocks, class countdowns, instructor changes.
- **Youth & Camps:** Check-in waypoints, maps, field-trip departures, weather pivots.
- **Back-of-House Staff Boards:** SOP refreshers, safety drills, shift highlights, HR updates, benefits windows.
- **Outdoor/Entry LED (Where Allowed):** Hours, closures, storms, and emergency messaging.

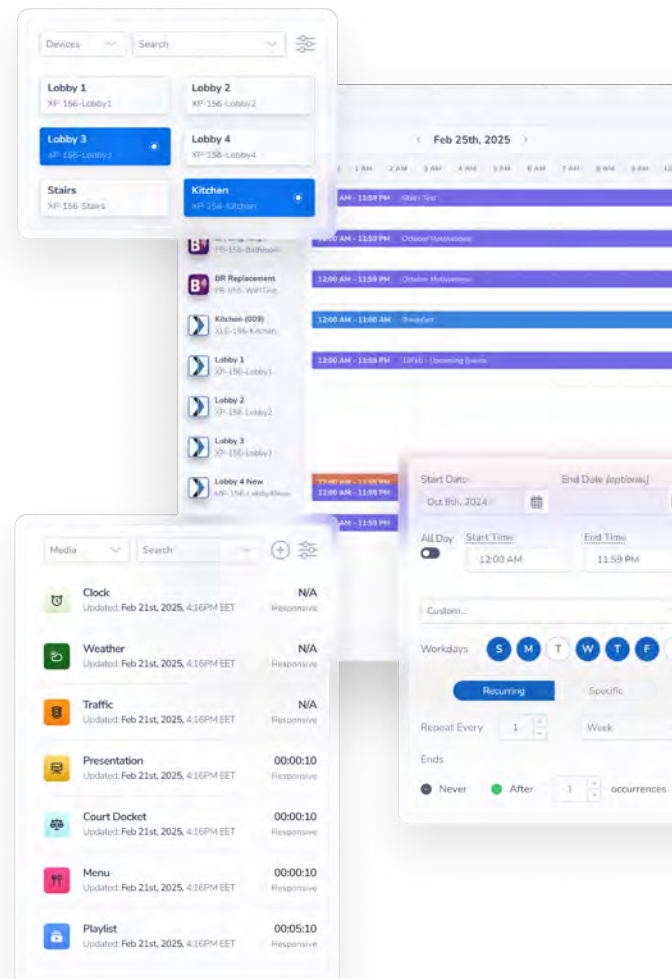


From Pilot to Portfolio

PHASE 1

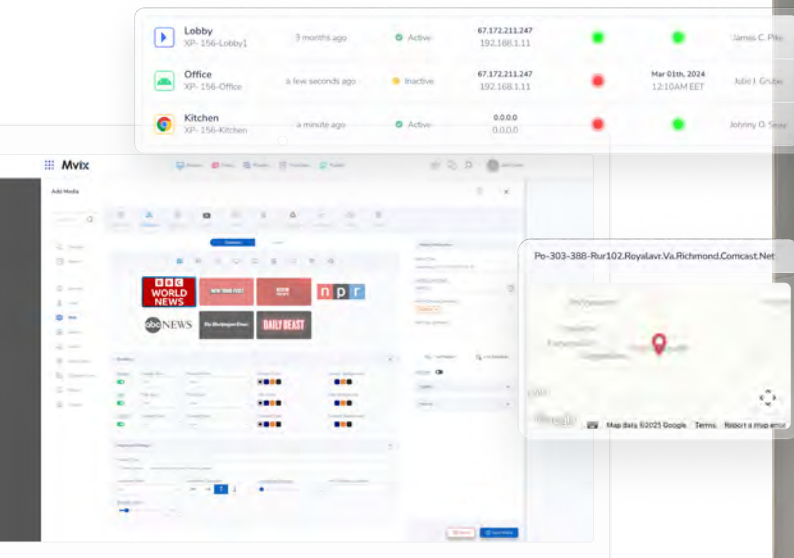
Discovery & Requirements (2–4 Weeks)

- Goals & KPIs:** Specify 3–5 outcomes (e.g., cut front-desk repetitive questions by 30%; reduce print spend by 40%; raise on-time class starts by 15%).
- Content Inventory:** Program schedules, room maps, aquatics status, emergency procedures, marketing assets, sponsorship content, translation needs.
- Venues & Mounting:** Identify high-traffic lines of sight and ADA clearances; note power/data availability.
- Network & Security:** VLAN or guest network? Content source whitelisting? Authentication and role-based access?
- Compliance:** Accessibility (font, contrast, dwell time), privacy for roster displays, municipal signage ordinances for exterior LEDs.



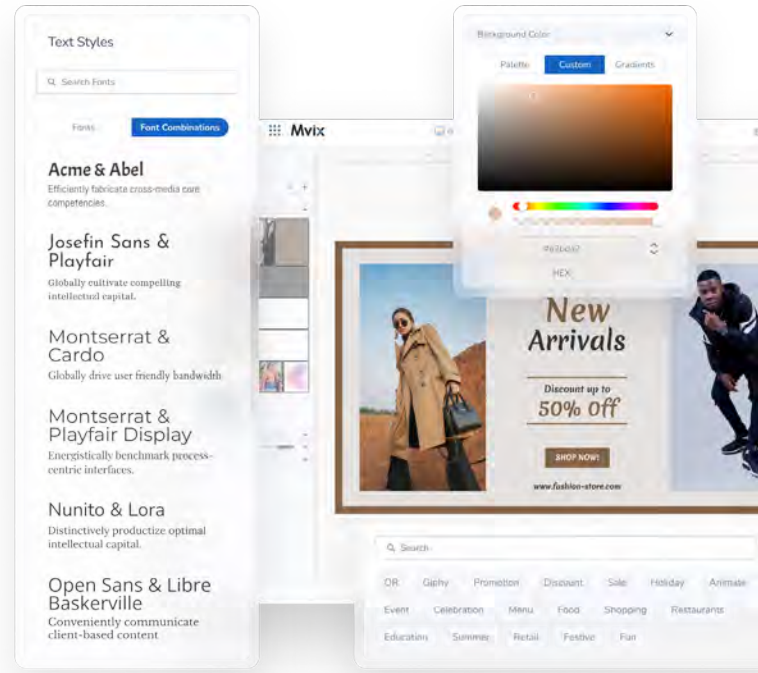
Pilot (6–10 Weeks)

- 1. Scope:** 3–8 **Signage Screens** across the lobby and one program area (aquatics or gym), plus one **Interactive Display** for directory/wayfinding.
- 2. Content Inventory:** 43–55" commercial panels (lobby), 32–43" for outside rooms; consider higher-nit displays for bright lobbies; PoE for kiosks if supported.
- 3. Software/CMS:** Cloud-managed, role-based, playlist/scheduling engine, multi-tenant permissions, emergency override.
- 4. Content:** Living templates for schedules, closures, maps, and multilingual notices; set a weekly refresh cadence.
- 5. Success Metrics:** Baseline and post-pilot counts (front-desk FAQ tallies, late arrivals to classes, print costs).



Scale-Out (1-3 Quarters)

- Expand screens to every key choke point and program zone.
- Add **room-side tablets** (optional) for program status, class check-in, and QR-code self-service.
- Integrate feeds (registration system, aquatics/ league schedulers, weather alerts).
- Establish a **content governance** calendar (who updates what, and when).
- Introduce **sponsorship tiles** (if permitted) to offset operating costs.



Stakeholders and their roles



Center Director / GM:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



IT / Network Administrator:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



Operations Manager / Front Desk Lead:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



Aquatics / Fitness / Youth Program Leads:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



Facilities / Maintenance:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



Communications / Marketing:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



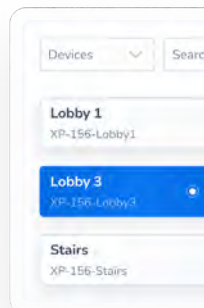
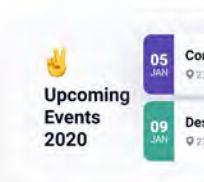
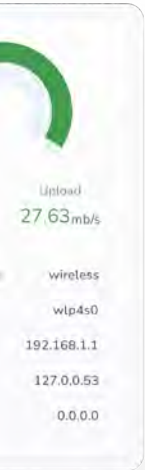
Risk / Safety / Emergency Management:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



Vendors / Systems Integrator:

Owens outcomes, approves budget, sets communications policy, arbitrates content priorities.



Plan Like a CFO

1. Hardware (Per Location)

+\$400

from

- **Commercial Displays (43"–55"):** \$400–\$1,200 each depending on nits, warranty, and brand.

+\$150

from

- **Media Players:** \$150–\$600 per screen (Windows/Android/Linux SOC or external player).

+\$2,500

from

- **Interactive Kiosks/Directories:** \$2,500–\$7,500 depending on enclosure, screen size, and touch tech.

+\$100

from

- **Mounts, Cabling, Power:** \$100–\$300 per screen (more for in-wall power or conduit).

+\$XXX

from

- **Outdoor/High-bright/LED:** Larger variance; budget by use case and local code.



2. Software & services

+\$0

from

- **CMS Licensing:** Ranges from one-time licenses to subscriptions (\$0–\$25+ per screen/month).

+\$1500

from

- **Implementation & Training:** \$1,500–\$10,000 for multi-site rollouts (networking, SSO, templates, integrations).

+\$0

from

- **Support:** Include SLA terms, firmware updates, and security patching cad



3. Operating Costs

1-3

hrs/week



~25%

from

- **Content Ops tTme:** 1–3 hrs/week per site for updates (drops with integrations & templating).
- **Energy:** Modern commercial panels are efficient; factor hours of operation and auto-sleep schedules.
- **Print Spend Reduction:** Often 25–60% less on paper/toner/lamination plus staff time redirected to service.

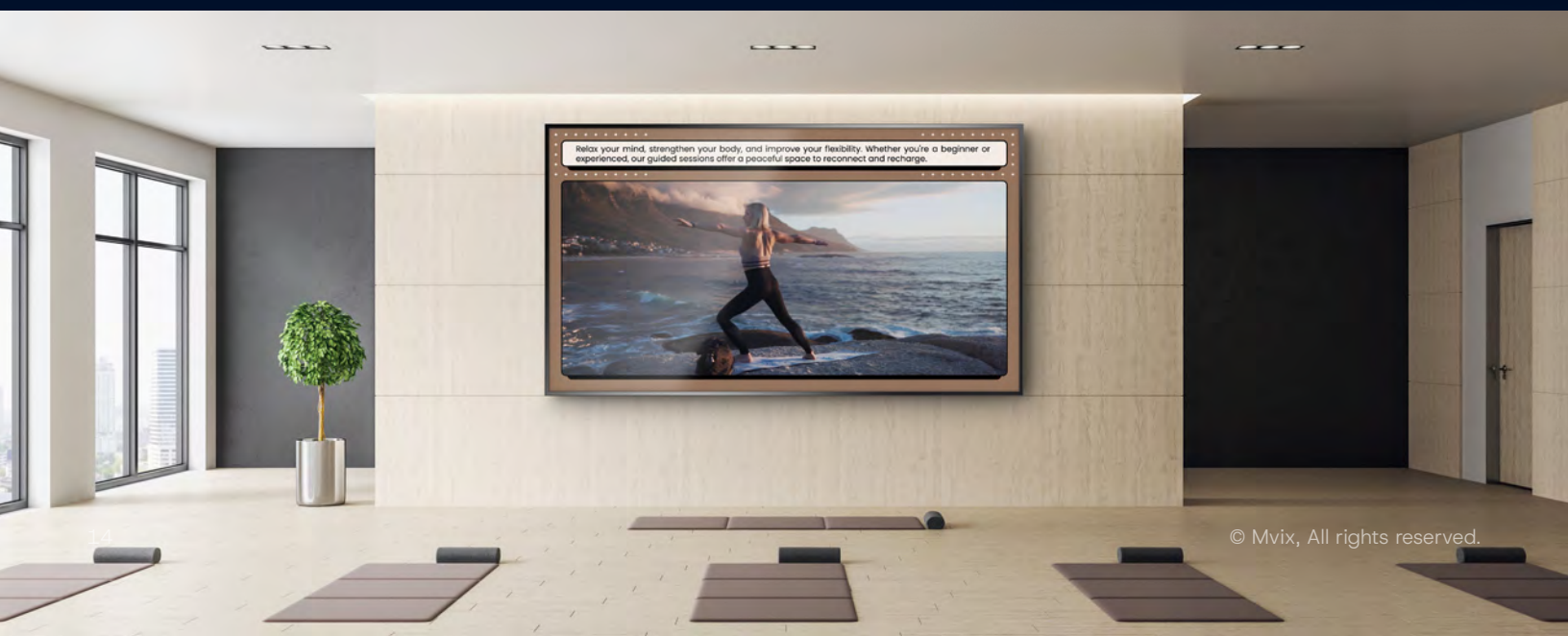
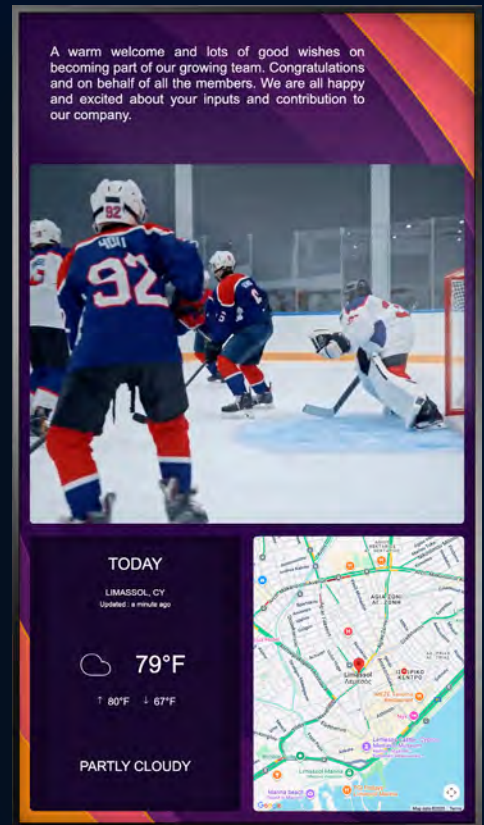
4. Offsets & Funding



~6-8%

CAGR

- **Sponsorship Placements** (local partners, health systems), **grant alignment** (public-safety, public-health communications), and **cross-departmental budgets** (Parks & Rec + Communications + Emergency Management).
- Market growth and competition are keeping costs reasonable; multiple forecasts peg **global display-screen markets growing ~6–8% CAGR**, improving total value over time.



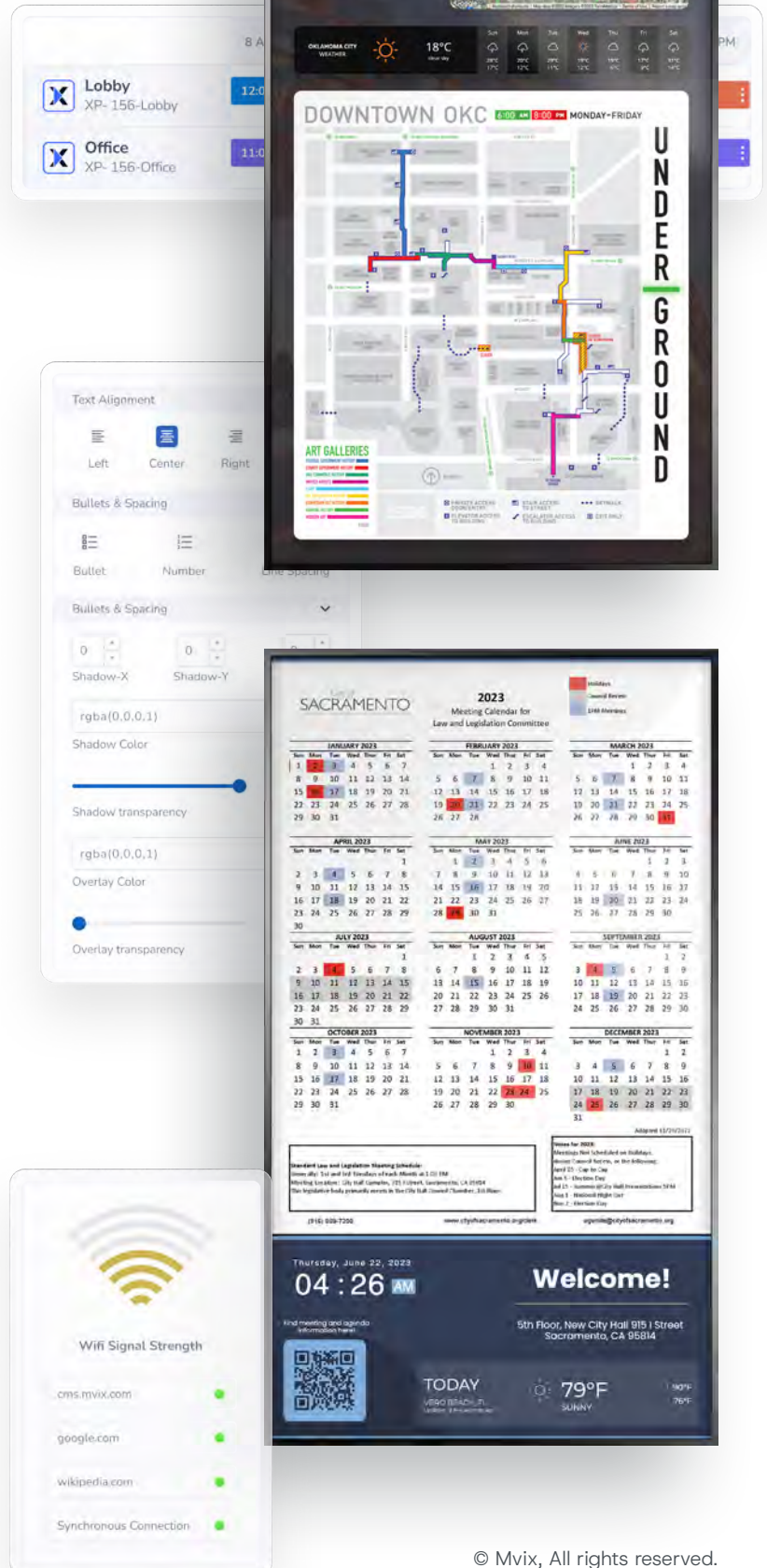
Content Strategy: a Practical Playbook

Core Rotations (Front Lobby & Busiest Corridors)

- “What’s on now/next” schedules (auto-pull from your registration platform).
- Facility maps + “You are here” pins; QR codes for mobile wayfinding.
- Closures, weather pivots, safety notices.
- New member orientation highlights; childcare info; scholarships and fee assistance.
- Inclusion & accessibility messages; multilingual slides for top community languages.

Program-Zone Displays

- **Aquatics:** Lane status, class rosters, coach/guard on duty, water-quality/status, safety rotation timers.
- **Gyms / Courts:** Court assignments, tournament brackets, scoreboard and announcements.
- **Studios:** Class line-ups, check-in QR, “Bring water/gear” cues.
- **Camps & Youth:** Field-trip itineraries, pick-up points, sunscreen/heat alerts.

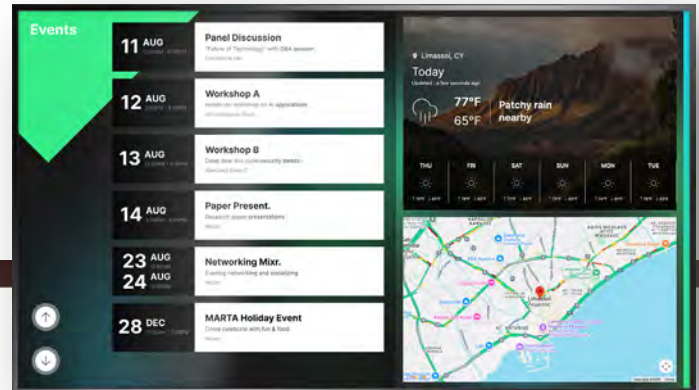


Tips & Tricks

- Keep dwell-time math honest: if visitors stand 20–30 seconds, keep screens in **8–12 second** bites and repeat important messages every 30–60 seconds.
- Favor **templated, data-driven** cards over bespoke designs.
- Build an **evergreen library** (seasonal templates, generic wayfinding, “water bottle” reminders) to reduce weekly effort.

Back-of-House Staff Boards

- Daily huddles, SOP videos, incident-free day counters, CPR refreshers, emergency binders digitized.
- Shift swaps and labor-law notices; benefits enrollment deadlines.



Integrations You'll Actually Use



Registration + Scheduling (e.g., PerfectMind, RecTrac, CivicRec): drive “now/next” grids and room status.



Weather & Emergency: automated alerts and crawl bars; CAP/IPAWS where appropriate.



Building/Room Calendars (Google/Microsoft): simple meeting room feeds.



Directory/Wayfinding: (searchable locations, ADA-compliant routes, dynamic rerouting for closures.

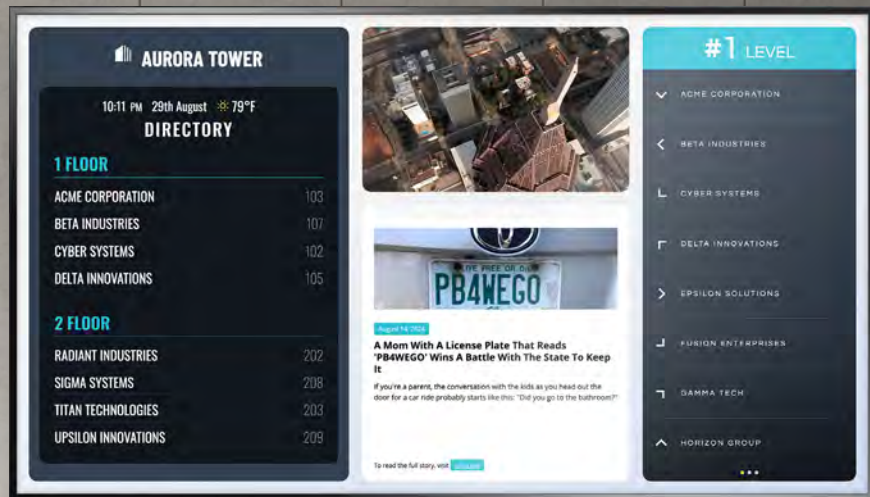


Volunteer/Hours Tracking: recognize contributions and highlight open shifts.



Surveys & QR: post-visit NPS, incident reporting, program interest polls.





Security & Accessibility: Make IT (and Legal) Happy

- **Network Isolation:** Place players on dedicated VLANs; restrict outbound traffic to CMS endpoints; enforce device-level autoupdate policies for security patches (while controlling OS auto-updates to avoid untested dependency changes).
- **Content Moderation:** Whitelist safe sources; avoid embedded third-party widgets without review.
- **Role-Based Access:** Principle of least privilege; audit trails for edits and pushes.
- **Accessibility by Design:** Minimum 18–24 pt at typical viewing distances, strong contrast, non-flashing visuals, alt routes for critical alerts, consistent bilingual layouts.
- **Privacy:** No PII on public screens; use ID codes or first-name-only where needed.

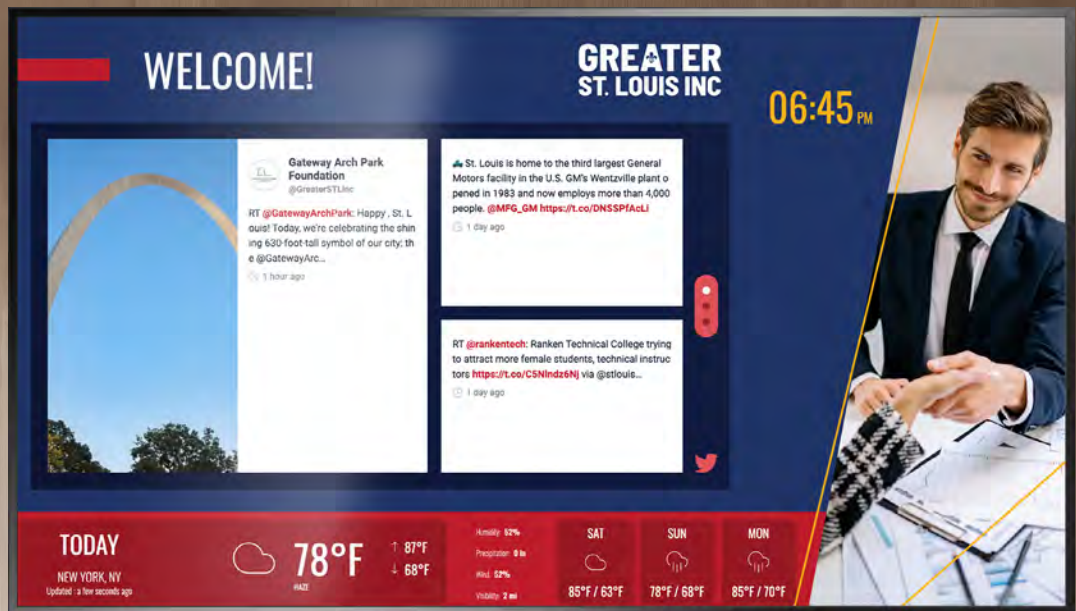
Emerging Trends

- **AI-Assisted Content Ops:** Auto-generate templated slides from your program database (“Create weekly Class Highlights from Studio A calendar”).
- **Machine-Learning Scheduling:** Predict high-traffic times and auto-reorder playlists (maps and queue info during afternoon rush; promotions during lull).
- **Interactive Displays With Lightweight Analytics:** Heatmaps of tap paths (no PII) inform kiosk UX and signage placement.
- **Context-Aware Signage:** Weather + program data triggers (“Thunder detected → Indoor alternatives on screens”).
- **Cloud Security Hardening:** Zero-trust approaches for players and CMS, plus stricter supply-chain verification of firmware.

Thought leadership in parks & recreation echoes this trajectory: technology and even AI will advance, but public-sector deployments must balance innovation with privacy, fairness, and community expectations.

Queue Management





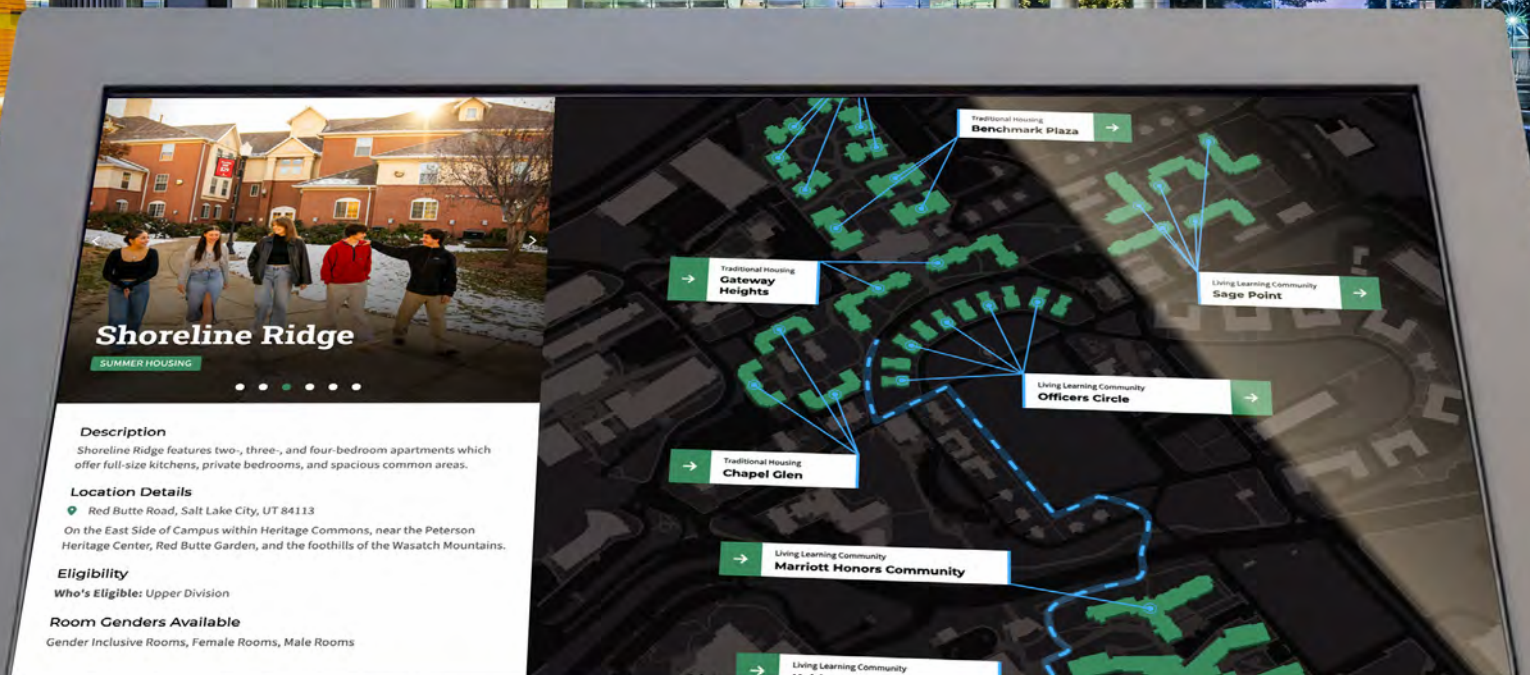
How Mvix Has Helped?

Over two decades, Mvix has supported **hundreds of public and nonprofit locations** with **Display Screens** and **Interactive Displays** that emphasize reliability, role-based control, and quick time-to-value. Typical deliverables include:

- **Turnkey Rollouts** for multi-site agencies (hardware, software, mounting, cabling, commissioning).
- **Role-Based CMS** so program managers update their own slides while central communications control brand and county-wide alerts.
- **Pre-built Content Apps** (events, weather, alerts, YouTube/vodcasts) and data-driven templates that reduce weekly workload.
- **Training & Support** aligned to public-sector realities—lean teams, rotating volunteers, and strict IT policies.

Procurement Tips

- **Specify Commercial-Grade Displays** (warranty hours, burn-in protections, OPS/SOC options).
- **Require Remote Device Management** (reboots, screenshots, health checks).
- **Ask for SSO/IdP Support** (Azure AD/Entra ID, Okta) and role-based permissions.
- **Insist on Content Ownership & Exportability** (avoid lock-in; ensure media and templates are yours).
- **Pilot Clauses** in RFPs: acceptance criteria tied to KPI deltas (e.g., front-desk FAQs down X%).
- **Training Deliverables:** admin + content-creator sessions, plus a one-page “screen operator” SOP.



A Realistic Plan

QUARTER 1

- Baseline metrics (FAQ log, late arrivals, print spend).
- Install **4–6 Signage Screens** (lobby + two program zones) and **1 Interactive Display** in the main facility.
- Connect schedule feeds; publish a multilingual “Top 10” evergreen library.

QUARTER 2

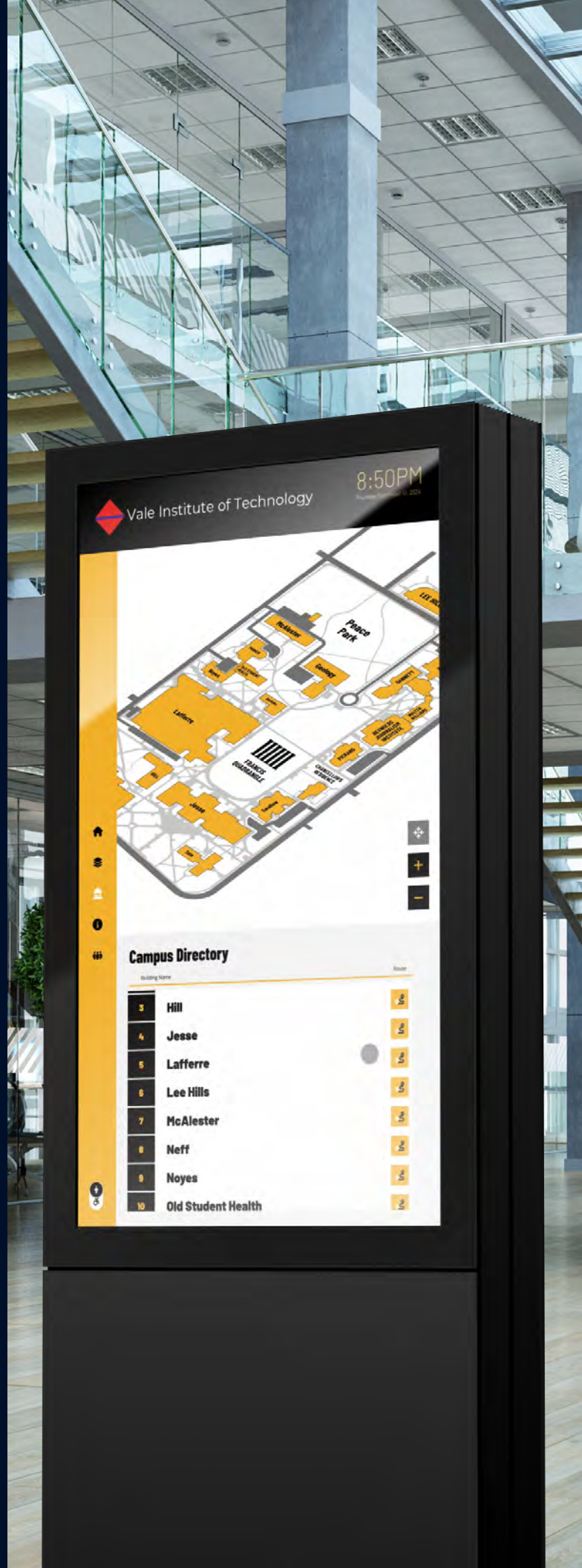
- Add staff displays; automate aquatics/league feeds; enable emergency override.
- Expand to outdoor entry or vestibule display where code allows.

QUARTER 3

- Scale to satellite sites (2–3 screens/site); standardize templates and governance.
- Launch sponsorship tiles to offset operating costs (if policy permits).

QUARTER 4

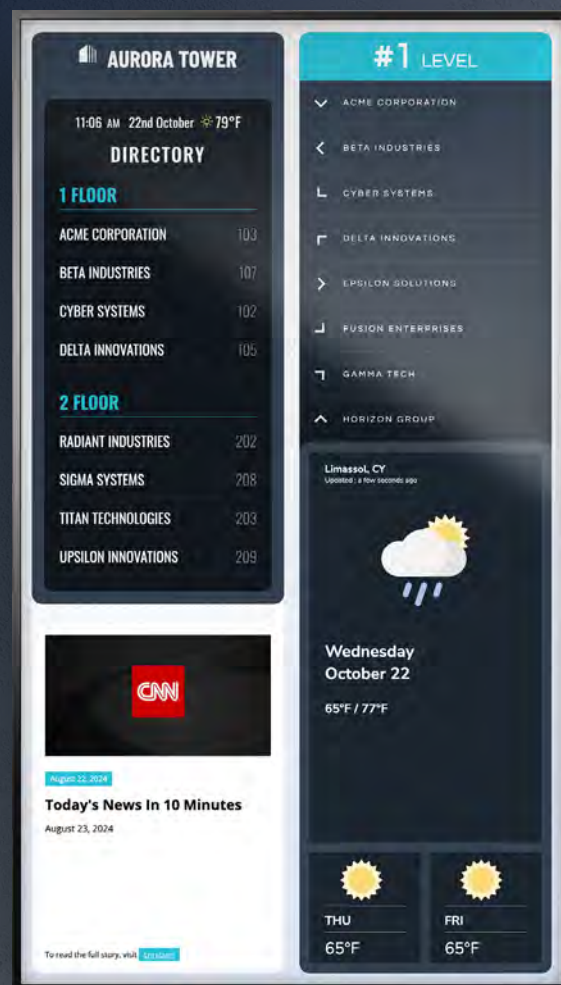
- Review KPIs; aim for **30–50% reduction in print spend, 15–25% fewer “where do I go?” desk queries**, improved on-time starts, and better NPS for “communications clarity.” (Ranges align with the operational savings and attention/recall improvements cited earlier.)



The Bottom Line

Signage Displays are no longer a “nice to have”—they’re essential infrastructure for service-heavy recreation centers. They reduce friction for visitors, free staff from repetitive tasks, and let you respond to the day’s inevitable changes in real time. Public-sector data shows agencies are still heavily reliant on print inside facilities, which means the **ROI runway is long**: fewer printed materials, fewer misroutes, shorter lines, and more programs filled on time. With a modest pilot and clear KPIs, you can move from “we taped a flyer” to “**we updated the building**”—in minutes.

If you’d like examples to copy-paste, learn how county-wide networks are structured, or see templates for aquatics, gym courts, and wayfinding, the **Loudoun County PRCS** case study offers a proven blueprint for multi-site deployments and governance.





Contact



23475 Rock Haven Way
Suite 125 Sterling, VA 20166 (USA)



+1 866 310 4923
+1 703 382 1739



www.mvix.com



info@mvix.com