



Iowa Makes "Dramatic Improvement in Information Technology"

In a report released January 30 by the **Maxwell School at Syracuse University and Governing Magazine**, Iowa received an overall grade of B+ (up from the state's grade of B two years ago) on how well it manages the government systems that deliver public services. Only three states scored higher with an A-.

The most dramatic improvement for the state was in information technology, where, *Governing* reports, "Legislation enacted last year has enhanced the coherence of Iowa's IT structure. For the first time, the CIO holds a statutory position and has been given authority to require interoperability of new IT systems. It is now abundantly clear to all agencies that before they procure anything, they must go to the IT department, submit a description and make sure the purchase fits with the state's standards. What's more, the state is requiring post-implementation review of new projects to see if they actually deliver on their promised benefits."

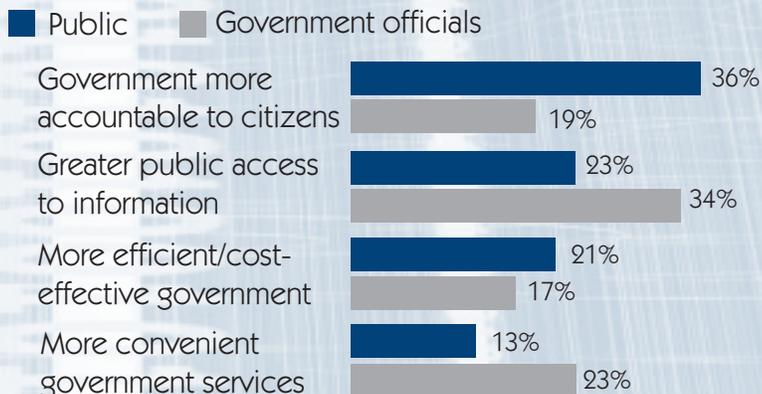
Iowa's grade in IT rose from a C+ two years ago to a **B**, today.

Iowa is also poised to adopt an entity-wide IT architecture. On the other hand, the state hasn't yet adopted a long-term IT master plan, although the master plan for 100% E in 2003 was announced by Gov. Vilsack during his Condition of the State speech.



Key benefits of e-government

Major benefits expected from e-government by the public compared to those of government officials



Source: Hart-Teeter poll from <http://www.msnbc.com/news/468914.asp?cp1=1#BODY>

When I was informed that I would be the first Information Technology Department administrator profiled in the Managing IT newsletter, I could not control my reaction. Imagine the physical sensation of not breathing combined with a suddenly elevated heart rate and you're getting the picture. To add to my distress, I was informed I needed to write this little bio myself! No pressure!

So, let's get the introduction out of the way. Hi, I'm Sandy Dell, the new Chief Financial Officer and Administration Division Administrator in the Information Technology Department. I've worked in this position for four months (though for others, it may seem longer). I oversee the following functions in ITD: accounting (including invoicing, pricing, budgeting, reporting, disbursements, etc.), personnel, purchasing, grant-writing, and front-desk support.

As you probably suspected, I am an accountant/CPA with 19 years of experience. I was working at Principal Financial Group as a Senior Financial Accounting Leader when I applied for my current position. (My titles just seem to get longer all the time!) The position seemed to be an excellent fit for me because I had been extremely involved in the pricing/invoicing of my business unit's services to other departments in Principal. I also had worked with Principal's corporate purchasing area for several years.

I am often asked if I like my new job. The answer is a very sincere "yes." In ITD, I am surrounded by extremely knowledgeable people who daily demonstrate a passion for their work. I have a unique opportunity to be part of bringing an ambitious IT vision to the State of Iowa. And, I am serving the citizens of my home state.

I feel very fortunate to have an excellent staff in my division. We have some key challenges ahead:

Respond to the continually emerging new IT services with fair pricing

Streamline our data collection for our invoices and make those invoices more understandable for our customers across the state

Staff appropriately – we are currently searching for an additional person to help manage the enterprise-wide IT purchasing process

Proactively benchmark our services to outside providers, to prove the value we provide

If you need to contact me, my phone number is 515-281-5140 and my email address is sandy.dell@its.state.ia.us.



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Online Real Estate Renewals Now a Reality

For the first time in December of 2000, Iowa real estate agents had the opportunity to renew licenses on the Internet. The new process allows licensees to know immediately whether their license has been renewed. ITD and the Department of Commerce are pleased to report that all initial renewals were accomplished.

The response to the new system has been very positive. Former Real Estate Commissioner Russ Nading stepped forward and became the first real estate licensee to renew online in Iowa. Nading accomplished the task without a hitch. He stated "I found the process simple, efficient, and quick. If you can remember your social security number, credit card number and birth month you can renew online." He also indicated that being a novice and not a computer whiz presented no problems. "The process only took me about two minutes even as slow as I type. I would recommend online renewal to everyone, give it a try, you will never go back to the mail system."

The Online License Center can be accessed from a link on the Real Estate Commission Home Page located at www.state.ia.us/irec

The current ITD plan is to bring each of the other professions in the Professional Licensing Division of the Department of Commerce online. According to the Professional Licensing Division, if the division had not been afforded this opportunity through ITD, the costs involved with this type of undertaking would have continued to prohibit the division from offering this service.



DOM Data Center Recommendations Completed

The Iowa Legislature asked the Department of Management to make recommendations on "the manner in which the state's three data centers should be managed." Last summer, the DOM convened a task force to address this issue. The task force's main recommendation is that operational management of the three mainframe data centers be the responsibility of three agencies: The Information Technology Department (ITD), Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), and the Department of Transportation. No longer would ITD staff be deployed at the IWD data center; instead, this proposal would move staff back to IWD as IWD employees. Management of each data center will be consistent with the enterprise directions and within the enterprise initiatives set by the governor and legislature in creating ITD. Other recommendations by the task force include:

Establishment of Enterprise Competency Centers

Establish Enterprise Memorandums of Understanding

Enhance Collaborative Purchasing Strategies

Identify Enterprise Automation Infrastructure Architecture Requirements.

Copies of the complete report are available on the ITD website: www.state.ia.us/government/its/

FY '02 Core IT Services Pilot Project

In the normal conduct of state business, the vast majority of state employees require access to a number of core information technology services. These core IT services are substantially similar in most cases and are not agency specific. These services are currently acquired by state agencies in a number of ways. Agencies purchasing services are typically invoiced for those services at some established rate and must pay the service provider agency. This has given rise to a multitude of billing systems and billable/non-billable schemes for agencies, boards, and commissions throughout state government.

The funding of core services through the appropriations process will result in: a) the elimination of the cumbersome and inconsistent billing mechanisms currently in place; b) facilitate the standardization of core IT services; and c) result in lower overall average costs for core IT services.

The proposed core IT services program consists of three components:

Phased-in funding beginning with \$2 million in FY '02 to enable ITD to implement a service billing structure that eliminates the over recovery of federal dollars that has been an unintended consequence of the current billable/non-billable cost recovery system.

Funding to cover the costs associated with the various administrative computer systems being used by all state agencies. Absent an operational appropriation for these systems, we have historically recovered their cost through the various billing mechanisms available to ITD and its predecessor organizations. This funding would eliminate the inappropriate cost allocation to billable agencies which exacerbates the over recovery of federal dollars.

Funding for ITD to provide a complete set of core information technology services to state agencies. ITD and DOM propose to begin delivering this set of services to a few executive branch agencies on a pilot basis in FY '02 as a proof of concept.

In our next issue:

21st Century Learning Infrastructure
DHS Confidentiality Training
Digital Government Guru

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