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The State of Iowa Communications Task Force

FINAL REPORT

**Submitted to
Governor Terry E. Branstad
February 12, 1985**

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The Honorable Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa
State Capitol
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Governor Branstad:

Information management and telecommunication technologies offer the state an opportunity to substantially improve the quality, productivity and cost effectiveness of government service. At the same time, deregulation of communications and advances in and varying costs of technologies pose a challenge to the state to adopt correct choices.

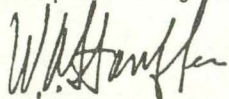
In August of 1984, you appointed this 15 member Task Force to study the state's telecommunication and information management systems and to recommend a plan for management and development for the future. The members of the Task Force worked with knowledgeable people from state government and called upon their own expertise as representatives of the private sector with knowledge and interest in up-to-date telecommunication and information management technology. This final report is the result of several months of fact finding and deliberation.

We have every confidence that state government can achieve the goals set forth in this final report. It was obvious from the start of our work that those responsible for telecommunications and information management in state government have an understanding of the rapidly changing technologies and an abiding concern to fulfill their respective missions in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.

The Task Force believes the recommendations in this report will help state government adopt telecommunication and information management technologies which will contain costs, increase efficiency of operations and improve service to the public.

The work of the Task Force has been a valuable experience for all of us. Please accept our thanks for offering us this opportunity to serve the State of Iowa through our recommendations. It is our hope that these recommendations will prove valuable to you.

Respectfully submitted,

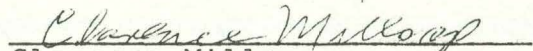


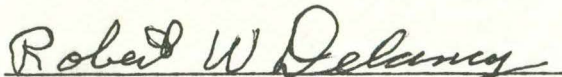
William Stauffer
Chair

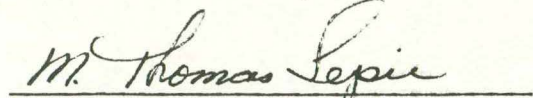
MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

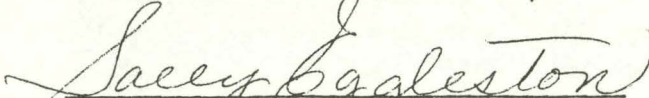
William Stauffer, Chair



Robert J. Andrews

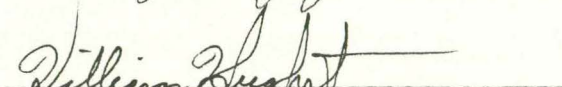

Clarence Millsap

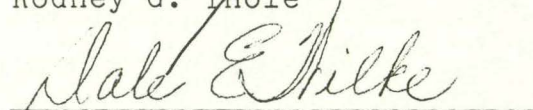

Robert W. Delaney


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Task Force members	i
Introduction	iii
I. Restructure Management of Statewide Telecommunications and Information Management Systems	1
II. Actively Plan and Coordinate Statewide Telecommunications and Information Management	5
III. Provide Coordination for Shared Systems and Facilities	11
IV. Provide a Means to Plan Financing of Telecommunications and Information Management Improvements	13
V. Minority Report	
A. Letter to the Chair	15
B. Report	17
Responses to the Governor	21
Summary	25
Persons who provided public comments	29

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

VOTING MEMBERS

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Robert J. Andrews	Staff Vice President Director of Customer Services Meredith Corporation	Des Moines
Robert W. Delaney	Vice President Information Services The Bankers Life	Des Moines
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M. Thomas Sepic	State Vice President-Iowa General Telephone Company of the Midwest	Grinnell
Rodney G. Thole	Executive Vice President Telecommunications Group Heritage Communications, Inc.	Des Moines
Dale E. Wilke	Director of Information Systems Maytag Company	Newton

INTRODUCTION

As the rate of technological change continues to increase in the fields of telecommunications and information management, the opportunities and options of which users can take advantage increase at an even greater rate. Added to this rapid pace are the far-reaching effects of deregulation within the telecommunications industry.

This report will use two terms throughout to define a scope of operations. Telecommunications is defined as the transmission of voice, data, the written word or other visual signals by electronic means. Information management is defined as the use, preparation or manipulation of voice, data, word or visual signals for the purpose of communicating information.

Although the executive agencies of the State of Iowa have a commendable performance record in the selection and implementation of advances in the areas of telecommunications and information management, there is no effective coordinating management to assure that decisions on the use of this technology will provide long-range cost-effectiveness and inter-agency compatability.

As state agencies, just as in the private sector, become more information conscious and dependent, decisions made in the acquisition and implementation of this technology will have a significant effect on the ability of these agencies to cost-effectively fulfill their mission and to interact with other agencies.

It is our basic philosophy that a consistent coordination of the selection and use of telecommunications and information management among state agencies is crucial for them to fulfill their mission in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible.

The Task Force seeks to enhance this cooperation and coordination in its recommendations on directions for the state's telecommunications and information management.

In the Task Force's deliberations to find acceptable and workable recommendations, its members were consistently debating the longstanding organization philosophy of centralization versus decentralization.

Certainly, with the diversity of activities inherent in the various agencies of state government, it is desirable to leave the responsibility for management of these functions within each organization if at all possible.

On the other hand, technology is changing so rapidly in telecommunications and information management that a centralized planning and operating approach may help the State of Iowa achieve the optimum return in its investment in these two technologies.

This was the dilemma presented our Task Force.

It concluded, although not unanimously, that the state achieve centralized planning through the following recommendations while, at the same time, leaving the operating responsibilities to the various agencies, which allows them to retain their own autonomy.

A minority report, recommending a different approach, is included with this report.

I. RESTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT OF STATEWIDE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Telecommunications and information management technologies will continue to evolve dramatically. As telecommunications are deregulated and diversified, the responsibility for management of telecommunications decisions will shift from a private provider to the user. As new technologies to improve service, such as cellular radio, fiber optics, cable and satellite distribution systems enter the competitive market place, new cost saving options become available. The state should develop a capability to manage telecommunications and information management for all state agencies to take advantage of this new environment of increased technical complexity, a host of new economic choices, and fundamental redistribution of responsibility from communications common carriers to the state.

Recommendation I.1: The state should be an active manager of telecommunications and information management to grasp opportunities available for improving efficiency and cost effectiveness in operations.

The Communications Advisory Council (CAC) is an advisory organization made up of some major agencies within the state which has dealt with planning in telecommunications and information management decisions in the past. The restructured Communications Advisory Council could become a viable management team to meet the challenges of the future environment.

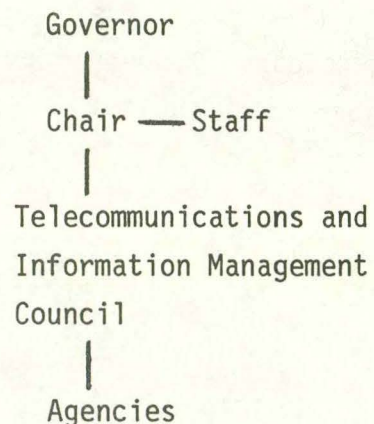
Recommendation I.2: The Task Force recommends that the Governor immediately revise the mission of the Communications Advisory Council so that it is the management organization responsible for statewide telecommunications and information management planning, coordination, development, and for facilitating implementation of plans as they affect statewide systems.

The TIM Council should be a planning and service organization at all levels of management and should be aware of state agency equipment and functions to insure statewide compliance with the state's strategic and tactical plans.

Recommendation I.4: The Telecommunications and Information Management Council should be made up of the State Comptroller, the Director of the Department of General Services, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Executive Secretary of the State Board of Regents, the Executive Director of the Department of Public Broadcasting, the State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction, the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, the Adjutant General, the Chair appointed by the Governor (if not already on the council) and one at-large member from agencies not represented on the council appointed by the chair of the TIM Council and approved by the TIM Council for a one year term. The TIM Council should allow all user agencies a means through which they can enter into the decisions which may affect their operations.

Recommendation I.5: The Governor may wish to appoint up to three non-voting members who can bring technical expertise from the private sector to the council.

Recommendation I.6: The chair of the TIM Council should be a coordinator and facilitator, appointed by, reporting on matters of the TIM Council directly to, and serving as chair at the pleasure of the Governor. The Governor may wish to appoint one of the Governor's staff, one of the TIM Council members, or any other person in state government.



The chair should have a vote and should be available to serve for a

II. ACTIVELY PLAN AND COORDINATE STATEWIDE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Planning

Well coordinated statewide planning will assure that duplication of facilities and services is minimized, that opportunities to improve telecommunications and information management functions are not missed, and that the appropriate systems are developed for the efficient operations of state government and for the overall benefit of the people of Iowa.

Recommendation II.1: The TIM Council should coordinate long range and tactical telecommunications and information management development.

The TIM Council should design a long range telecommunications and information management strategy for shared resources. This strategy should include tactical implementation and funding plans. The strategy should be reviewed annually by the TIM Council and should be used as a guide for a TIM Council annual implementation plan.

The TIM Council should develop an annual tactical plan to implement immediate and ongoing changes as appropriate considering the evolution of technology and as economic factors change.

An annual report of the activities and plans of the TIM Council should be presented to the Governor and to the Communications Review Committee of the General Assembly.

Compatibility

Recommendation II.2: The TIM Council should review any agency plan drafts which could have impact upon the state plan to determine the compatibility of system designs, operations and equipment.

The size of Iowa government as a customer for telecommunications and information management products and services can be advantageous in negotiating beneficial terms from vendors.

Maintenance

Recommendation II.5: Equipment maintenance should be coordinated through the TIM Council to promote sharing of services or sharing of maintenance service contracting where appropriate and cost effective.

Software Coordination

Recommendation II.6: Software development should be coordinated by the TIM Council where appropriate and cost effective.

Software costs often meet or exceed the costs of hardware in telecommunications and information management. Software development is a service that should be shared through various agencies to avoid duplication, to make information more widely accessible, to ensure compatibility, and to cut purchasing and development costs.

Research

Recommendation II.7: The TIM Council should serve as the coordinating body to pool the research of technologies, hardware and software where appropriate and cost effective.

Training and Career Development

Recommendation II.8: To ensure that agencies have appropriate training programs, the TIM Council should be active in the coordination of training programs in telecommunications and information management.

As a result of deregulation and as agencies require more information management services, the state must assume more

branch. However, due to the increased use of telecommunications and information management by the legislative and judicial branches of state government, these branches should be invited to participate in conforming with the plans and sharing opportunities created through the TIM Council.

The legislative and judicial branches should receive copies of the TIM Council's long range plan. A dialogue between branches should be maintained to keep all branches aware of potential opportunities for more efficient, cost effective cooperation in these areas.

III. PROVIDE COORDINATION FOR SHARED SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES

Recommendation III.1: The state should merge existing and planned communications and data networks and facilities where feasible and economically justified.

This recommendation follows the basic philosophy of the Task Force that coordination of the state's telecommunication and information management resources can lead to efficiencies and cost effectiveness. In addition, the Task Force reviewed past consultant studies which supported combined and integrated systems.¹

The TIM Council should oversee feasibility studies to establish the cost and effectiveness of current systems and facilities compared with those of increased networking. The study also should determine if systems and facilities should be owned by the state or leased from other providers. Ownership by the state should be justified through significant benefits.

Recommendation III.2: The TIM Council should coordinate policies, planning and direction of state networks and should determine what agency will be responsible for managing and operating a shared system. The agencies operating the facilities served by the shared system should retain responsibility for those facilities.

Agencies operating shared networks or facilities should report to the TIM Council in regard to those networks or facilities.

¹"An Integrated Communications System for the State of Iowa," Jansky and Bailey Systems Engineering Division, 1967.

"Needs, Issues, Options and Recommendations for Telecommunications Management in the State of Iowa," Sachs/Freeman Associates, Inc. 1978.

IV. PROVIDE A MEANS TO PLAN FINANCING OF
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendation IV: The TIM Council should be responsible for statewide planning for financing telecommunications and information management improvements.

To accomplish financing its goals, the TIM Council should work closely with the Governor's Office, the State Comptroller and the General Assembly, through the Communications Review Committee and appropriations committees, to explain and justify budget requests, especially those which involve more than one agency.

January 7, 1985

Mr. William Stauffer
Chairman
State Communications Task Force

Dear Bill,

At our December 17, 1984 State Communications Task Force meeting, you encouraged individual members to submit minority reports on issues or concepts which they felt strongly about and might not be properly noted in the final Task Force recommendations. We believe your willingness to receive minority views for the record is an indication that you wish Task Force members to be open on all points of agreement and disagreement. We respect such an objective approach and herewith wish to restate our idea in a constructive and positive manner rather than fully endorse certain aspects of the Task Force recommendations which, in our judgment, will not achieve meaningful or lasting change in Iowa's telecommunications and information management process.

We feel strongly that the placement of statewide planning responsibilities and accountability for telecommunications and information management integration is a key issue which has a direct bearing on potential success of plans and actions to affect statewide communication economies and efficiencies in and among state departments and agencies. Further, we think there must be a single committed entity which is accountable for formulation and execution of short range and long range plans to achieve telecommunications resource sharing, avoidance of redundancy in network planning, and is constantly alert to cost containment and savings on projects which have statewide impact. The management entity must have knowledgeable experienced staff to implement and oversee statewide projects. In our view, this staff already exists in state government and our plan would not materially increase the level of state employees.

We believe the organizational alternative we offer is a better structure to address constructive management change than the approach advocated by the majority of the Task Force. We understand the attraction members have for a recommendation which simply restructures and strengthens the existing Communications Advisory Council, but we doubt, that, in a real world, members of such a group can consistently put aside self interest and place statewide benefits over other internal agency priorities. It is too easy to suggest that change will interfere with or impede an agency's ability to perform its mission. We prefer a structure where direct accountability for statewide planning and implementation is assigned to an impartial service group fully committed to cost saving action while sensitive to agency concerns.

STATE COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

MINORITY REPORT

As a preamble to the thoughts expressed in this minority report, the authors wish to note that we agree with and support many of the concepts, goals and objectives of our Task Force recommendations. The need for a recorded minority view is prompted only because we have a fundamental difference of opinion on the recommended structure to oversee and implement statewide telecommunications and information management planning and execution. These views in no way wish to discredit the excellent work conducted by the Task Force but simply wish to focus attention on another alternative which should be considered prior to committing to a state communications organization and planning model.

We believe, to achieve one of the goals established for us by the Governor, namely, to "develop a proposed administrative/managerial structure for the state's communications and information processing" we must describe a formal, accountable, organizational approach to management of communications issues and opportunities.

Over the years, the deliberations of the Communications Advisory Council, as presently constituted, have been useful and productive. Representatives of major state agencies and departments have come together to discuss technological changes, internal agency plans for telecommunications and data processing projects, and procedures and actions whereby true resource sharing has occurred. Exchange of these plans has been constructive and should continue. Various C.A.C. Task Forces have a good record of achievement in bringing together those who are inclined to cooperate on projects of mutual interest. Through the C.A.C., things have been quietly moving forward wherever participation and cooperation could be sold with reasonable ease.

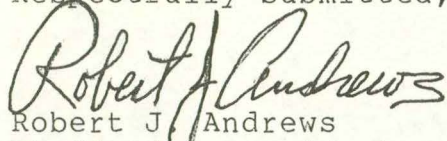
State department heads seem to favor the Communications Advisory Council in its present form because it is a forum in which to exchange ideas and learn about technological advances. The Council promotes information exchange and allows agencies to take advantage of benefits without necessarily giving up anything in return. Specific C.A.C. recommendations about one agency or integration activities for a group of agencies can be accepted or ignored. There is no central authority which can set a statewide integrated course and implement constructive statewide changes to reduce cost, contain cost, avoid cost, or improve service. A department administrator can avoid change by saying it will inhibit the agency's mission. No one, certainly not a C.A.C. member or Chairman, is inclined to differ with a department head's appraisal of consequences in his/her department, balanced against overall state needs.

Iowa needs a Department of Telecommunications Planning and Operations which is responsible for planning and implementing change in the highly technical areas of telecommunications and electronic information management throughout the state. The department should be a service agency with no separate mission other than to support as needed all other agencies, departments and commissions. The department must develop plans in conjunction with the Telecommunications and Information Management Council. Its Director and staff should be charged with the responsibility to implement and maintain systems. Clearly, it should not replace existing internal agency technical groups or in any way compete with their interests or objectives unless invited to do so. It should work with agency technicians to foster statewide advantages and should measure, generate and share statistics regarding telecommunications cost effectiveness with all state agencies.

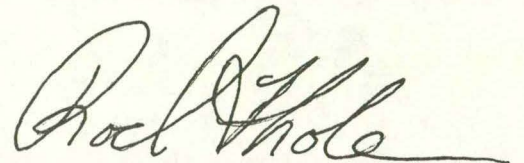
We are of the opinion that a Department of Telecommunications Planning and Operations created by combining the existing strengths and experience of the Department of General Services Communications Division and Comptroller's Data Processing Group, led by a full-time Director of Telecommunications, appointed by and reporting to the Governor provides the most accountable structure to meet the state's diverse telecommunications and information management needs. The structure is further enhanced by retaining a form of the Communications Advisory Council renamed the Telecommunications and Information Management Council. The Director of Telecommunications would be directed by the Governor to work with and through the Telecommunications and Information Management Council in developing mutually acceptable statewide telecommunications and information management coordination and integration among all state agencies.

With this structure, individual state department initiative and internal control of mission is preserved, while at the same time creating an entity with both the expertise and authority to develop meaningful plans and actions to ensure cost effective and carefully integrated statewide telecommunications and information management systems.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert J. Andrews
Staff Vice President
Director, Customer Services
Meredith Corporation



Rod Thole
Executive Vice President
Telecommunications Group
Heritage Communications, Inc.

RESPONSES TO THE GOVERNOR

Governor Branstad asked for answers to specific questions in his charge to the Task Force on August 16, 1984. The answers to these questions summarize the recommendations of the Task Force.

Are there duplicative efforts?

Yes.

The Task Force found duplication in planning, in purchasing, in operations and in networks. There are twenty-three independent communications networks operated across the state by state agencies. This duplication evolved as technology progressed and agencies took action independently to meet their mandates.

Those actions may have been cost effective at the time they took place and for specific purposes involved. However, through better coordination, the state and individual agencies might have captured opportunities for increased efficiency.

Is there incompatibility?

Yes.

While agencies have not been able to thoroughly plan coordinated action in networking and systems development to the extent possible, there has been a desire to maintain compatibility. If the state can develop a system to pull together a number of agencies' resources, compatibility will not be a problem.

Does the state have an appropriate coordinating management mechanism?

No.

There have been several cooperative efforts between agencies that have realized efficiencies in telecommunications and information

need to be able to adapt to changes in these variables. This means the coordinated planning process is as important as the plan itself.

The Task Force recommends that a plan be based on long range consolidation of telecommunications and information management networks on a step by step basis as each step becomes cost effective.

The costs, paybacks and funding alternatives will have to be determined as the TIM Council develops the plan.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- I.1 The state should actively plan telecommunications and information management.
- I.2 The Governor should revise the mission of the Communications Advisory Council to include planning and development of state-wide systems and facilities.
- I.3 The Iowa Code should be changed to rename the Communications Advisory Council to the Telecommunications and Information Management Council (TIM Council), to revise the council's authority and to broaden the membership. (Requires legislative action.)
- I.4 The membership of the TIM Council should include the heads of agencies which are major users, the Department of General Services, the State Comptroller, and an at-large member appointed from smaller agencies. (Requires legislative action.)
- I.5 The Governor may wish to appoint to the TIM Council up to three non-voting members from the private sector.
- I.6 The chair should be appointed at the pleasure of and report on matters of the TIM Council directly to the Governor. The chair should have a vote.
- I.7 The TIM Council will require at least one full time staff member. Other technical expertise as required should be provided by participating agencies.
- I.8 The TIM Council should meet at least once every two months.
- II.1 The TIM Council should coordinate telecommunications and information management planning.

- III. The state should merge networks and systems where feasible and economically justified.
- IV. The TIM Council should coordinate statewide planning for financing telecommunications and information management improvements.

PEOPLE WHO PROVIDED PUBLIC COMMENTS

Glen Anderson
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Department of General Services

Dr. Robert Benton
Department of Public Instruction

Michelle Clark
Department of Human Services

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Department of Public Instruction

Warren Dunham
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Erwin Frerichs
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Jerry Gamble
Iowa Inspector General

Douglas Gross
Board of Regents

Jim Johnson
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Claire Maple
Computation Center
Iowa State University

Dick Markham
Department of Revenue

Jon McCoy
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John Nimmo
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Kim Reagh
Department of Public Safety

Don Saveraid
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