

State Computer Information Officer Task Force Report

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1862, authored by Representative Mike Reynolds and Senator Tom Adelson and signed into law by Governor Henry on June 6, 2005, authorized a state Computer Information Officer task force to examine aspects of the state Computer Information Systems. Section 5 of the statute created a new law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 41.5a-2 of Title 62.

This report will have five sections. The first section will report the makeup of the task force and its purpose as set forth in HB 1862. The second section will examine the actions taken and information covered in the first meeting. The third section will cover the presentations by the Office of State Finance and OneNet. The fourth section will provide the information presented to the committee by the National Association of State Computer Information Officers. The fifth section will discuss the presentations by the State Department of Education and Department of Human Services that detail steps the agencies have taken to maximize savings in their Information Technology departments. The sixth section will detail recommendations of the task force.

SECTION ONE

The task force was comprised of 15 members. The Governor's appointees were Tony Hutchison and Mitch Gregory. Representative Gus Blackwell and Representative Fred Perry were appointed by the Speaker of the House. The two members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate were Sid Hudson and James Bo Reese.

The directors of the information technology or data processing divisions of several agencies also comprised the task force. They include Marq Youngblood from the Department of Human Services, Patti High from the Department of Education, Ted Hartley from the Oklahoma Tax Commission, Mike Mayberry from the State Department of Transportation, Joe Fleckinger and Jerry Stilwell from the Office of State Finance, Kurt Snodgrass from OneNet and the State Regents for Higher Education, Michelle Smith from the Corporation Commission, and Terry Feix from Southwestern Bell completed the committee.

The task force was subject to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act and the Oklahoma Open Records Act. The purpose of the task force was to analyze the role of information technology within state agencies, boards, commissions, departments and other entities of state government. The task force examined the need for a computer information officer for the state and a centralized agency for the state's information technology and telecommunications services and infrastructure.

SECTION TWO

The Office of State Finance set the date of the first meeting. The first meeting occurred on October 17, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in room 412C of the State Capitol. The first order of business was

to elect a chairman and a vice chairman. Representative Gus Blackwell was elected Chairman, and Tony Hutchinson was elected Vice Chairman.

The committee then discussed several different problems that are occurring within the present infrastructure of the information technology departments within the state.

One of the first problems discussed was the need for security within the state IT departments. Although all of the agencies present did have security measures in place, most felt that there was a need for an increase in the depth and breadth of that security. Another item that was voiced by several agencies was the need to streamline the acquisition process. It was felt that the three months detailed by some agencies for such procedures is much too long. Another need that was noted was the ability for agencies to collaborate with IT personnel. A desire to have the IT administrators meet together and share information was also voiced. One agency expressed a need for more long-range planning, but to keep the ability to be flexible with new inventions and innovations. Several expressed the need for a separate procurement procedure for IT and telecommunication equipment.

Another problem discussed was gaining the ability to leverage resources to maximize the infrastructure capacity. Politics and the problems associated with turf battles concomitant with this area were also related. One member related a need to have a state technology strategy. The questions to be addressed include: where is Oklahoma going as a state, what are the state's goals and visions, and what are the steps needed to benefit the economy. A final problem verbalized was the economic constraints imposed by agencies that limit the maximization of IT solutions and the economies that this would offer.

The committee then discussed a rough outline of the subsequent meetings and what topics needed to be covered. It was agreed that the next meeting would look at the present information technology and telecommunications structure within the state. A presentation by a national organization that covered the ways other states have utilized and organized a CIO structure would also be necessary. A final meeting would look at present strategies for saving money within agencies and discuss recommendations of the committee.

SECTION THREE

The second meeting of the State Computer Information Officer Task Force was held on Wednesday, November 2, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. at the State Capitol in room 412C. The agenda for the meeting included presentations by Joe Fleckinger and Jerry Stillwell of the Office of State Finance, as well as a presentation by Kurt Snodgrass from OneNet. Questions and discussion about the presentations followed each presenter.

Office of State Finance

The Office of State Finance (OSF) presentation began with the present responsibilities of that agency. OSF is responsible for coordinating the three-year data processing and telecommunications plans for different agencies. They also establish minimum standards for IT and telecommunications. During the last two years they have established standards for information

security, PC configurations, accessibility standards, and drafting data and telecommunication cabling and wiring installations standards with the Department of Central Services. They also develop and maintain applications for agencies and operate a data processing service center. The central telephone system in the Capitol, as well as telephone services for 83 agencies in the state complex, is also controlled by OSF. These agencies pay OSF for the service that they receive from this agency.

The agency also assists other agencies in acquisition and utilization of hardware, software, and telecommunications. They establish the interoperability of systems and applications and approve all purchases of technology and telecommunications. OSF develops, acquires, and implements a statewide financial, personnel, payroll, budget, and procurement system for all state agencies. The state portal system is outsourced to NICUSA by this agency. It also studies information technology accessibility and participates in an informal IT Agency Council.

OneNet

Kurt Snodgrass presented the present responsibilities of OneNet. OneNet is a division of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and is a unique public/private partnership. As a participant in Internet 2 and the National LambdaRail system, they are a part of the most advanced research networks in the world.

OneNet provides data communications, Internet access, and interactive video to K-12 schools, institutions of higher learning, state agencies, and other entities. This is accompanied by 24/7 help desk and technical support along with electronic mail, web hosting and E-rate consultation services. They also provide co-location services along with enterprise application services. Storage Area Networking (SAN), dedicated Lamdas, and equipment and integration contracts are also a part of OneNet's responsibilities.

OneNet was established in 1992 through a capital bond issue that provided \$14 million to implement a comprehensive statewide telecommunications network. In 1995 the Oklahoma State Regents approved the OneNet business plan. In 1996 there was a statewide deployment and implementation of the services. OneNet now has 42 hub sites serving thousands of Oklahomans in concert with 39 different telephone companies.

Some of the advanced applications that OneNet provides are virtual laboratories, digital libraries, distributed learning, digital video, tele-immersion, and distributed computation. These are provided in any combination. The Internet 2 K-20 Initiative is bringing innovators in K-12, community colleges, universities, libraries, and museums into appropriate regional, national, and international advanced networking efforts via the "Sponsored Education Group Participant" process. It also encourages and helps sustain partnerships among these education institutions, the private sector, and government.

OneNet is also an important participant in the National LambdaRail, which is a major initiative of U.S. research universities and private sector technology companies to provide a national scale infrastructure for research and experimentation in networking technologies and applications. As

a participant in this endeavor, Oklahoma moves to the forefront in advanced network initiatives and facilitates creation of new technologies and markets.

SECTION FOUR

The task force met for the third time on November 21, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in room 412C of the State Capitol. During this meeting the committee focused on the topic of a State Computer Information Officer. Doug Robinson of the National Association of State Computer Information Officers (NASCIO) spoke to the group. The presentation focused on the different organizations of other state IT departments, as well as the differing responsibilities and power of other state Computer Information Officers.

National Association of State Computer Information Officers (NASCIO)

NASCIO represents state chief information officers and information resource executives from the fifty states, six territories, and the District of Columbia. They reported that state chief information officers have become operational and strategic leaders directing the use of IT to advance the states' goals. According to the NASCIO, a strategic CIO should report to the Governor and Chief Administrative or Finance Officer. Some of his duties should include managing enterprise computing and telecom operations, implementing enterprise architecture and standards, and providing application development.

SECTION FIVE

The fourth meeting of the task force occurred on December 13, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in room 412C of the State Capitol. This meeting included presentations from Patti High of the State Department of Education and Marq Youngblood of the Department of Human Services.

Department of Education

Patti High from the State Department of Education presented information about IT support within their agency. The Department of Education is responsible for determining the policies and directing the administration and supervision of the state public school system. There are 540 school districts in Oklahoma, with a total of 49,085 certified staff and 32,320 support staff, serving 634,467 students.

The Department of Education described the organization of in-house staff support they have hired to administer their microcomputer and network support, mainframe applications and operations, and web applications. The Department noted some of their challenges with regard to funding, which include the limited availability of state funds, caps on full-time employees, constant technology changes, and federal and state legislative mandates. Stakeholder expectations for more data, improved integrity, and faster response also produce challenges for the Department. There is also the need to eliminate paper-based reporting and to migrate from mainframe to web applications.

A videoconference center and instructional technology lab are just two of the Department's technological accomplishments. Their current initiatives include replacing remaining paper collections with web-based systems, replacing remaining Macintosh desktop units, upgrading agency electrical systems, and securing additional employees.

Department of Human Services

Marq Youngblood presented a number of cost saving actions the Department of Human Services has implemented regarding their information systems technology. The Department was able to see \$150,000 in annual savings from a term agreement project. A data long distance charge reduction for remote access services also resulted in \$201,856 in annual savings. Frame relay bundling produced \$180,444 in annual savings, and bundled billing resulted in \$95,268 in annual savings.

Cost savings were also reflected during computer and third-party software replacement, as well as in local area network consolidation and in-sourcing application support. DHS recommends that these actions be utilized to offset the rising costs of maintenance, equipment replacements and upgrades, and new solutions.

SECTION SIX

The following section contains recommendations from the members of the task force. Most of these recommendations were discussed during the various meetings.

Office of State Finance and OneNet

Some of the recommendations dealt exclusively with the Office of State Finance and OneNet and came from these two agencies. One suggestion was to rename the agency as the Office of Finance and Information Technology to elevate the importance of the IT function of this agency. Another idea was to streamline Information Technology purchasing by removing or reducing the Department of Central Services' role in the process to improve timing and efficiency. Agencies could also share functions that are not specific to individual environments that could be centrally managed. This would include data center operations, networks and strategic IT platforms. Expanding enterprise applications and services could also achieve cost savings and economies of scale. Every agency could also shift to common software or applications that would help save on application licensing fees.

OneNet could work with OSF to provide innovative telecommunications options such as VOiP to agencies. A joint task force may be needed to study transition issues and financing mechanisms. This task force could also look at a Disaster Recovery Center and a Data Center.

Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation proposed two recommendations. First, it was advised that agencies need to be given guidance as to whether they are individually responsible for their own disaster recovery systems. Second, the Department questioned whether there should be a state

CIO appointed. Their concern was that adding another layer of oversight over state agencies would make the process more difficult.

Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services suggested that we streamline the procurement process to expedite access to information technology solutions and professional services. In addition to that, DHS recommended that the state create a state security strategy and a technology strategy that include improving the economic status of our state and our citizens. DHS also suggested that the state provide a cost avoidance/reduction effort that benefits all agencies, leverage of resources for agencies with common solutions and needs, infrastructure capacity sharing, and disaster recovery leadership. Agencies would also need cost saving/avoidance disciplines and direction like project management, portfolio management, and architecture establishment, as well as facilitation of using other agency services whenever possible.

Miscellaneous

Several members felt that it was imperative for agencies to maximize telecommunications services as well as increase efficiency and service. Utilization of different forms of telecommunications such as VOiP and teleconferencing can help agencies increase savings for state agencies. Another suggestion was to increase the amount agencies can spend on telecommunications without the approval of the Office of State Finance from \$0 to \$25,000. This would match the amount that agencies can spend on computer equipment before the approval from the Office of State Finance is needed.

Most members felt that it was necessary to streamline the acquisition procedure for both computer and telecommunication equipment or systems between the Office of State Finance and the Department of Central Services.

Much time was spent discussing the need for computer disaster recovery in case of emergencies. The topics of cold, warm, and hot sites were discussed and how they might be utilized to maximum efficiency. One suggestion was to establish a state advisory committee to develop plans for a computer recovery system. They would also be responsible for reviewing plans and actions for recovery of state agency computer data and data backup.