



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

WINTER 2003

NALIT NEWSLETTER

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NALIT Recognized

**Executive Committee
Officers**

The annual Legislative Staff Achievement Award was created by the NCSL Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee to recognize excellence in supporting the work of a state legislature and strengthening the legislative institution. This year, NALIT will again present an award to individuals, teams, or legislative offices who have contributed to NALIT and to the effectiveness of the legislative institution.

Recipients of the awards will be presented with a plaque and will be recognized by the Staff Chair during the legislative staff luncheon at the NCSL Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

2002 AWARDS WINNERS
Ann McLaughlin
Delaware
Jim Swain
Kentucky

chair's corner

Submitted by:

Michael P. Adams, NALIT Chair, Denver

As those who have gone before me will attest, the office of NALIT Chair offers many challenges and many opportunities. Perhaps surprisingly, sitting down to create this newsletter entry is one example of both.

That having been said, I think this is a good time for me to pass along some challenges and opportunities to you, the NALIT membership. In a year when state budgets, generally speaking, are at their worst, and when most of us are being asked to do much much more with much much less, I would encourage you to remember NALIT and NCSL as items in your "asset" column. One of the first questions I am often asked around here is "what are other states doing?" Having a pool of resources from which I can expect honest and unbiased information virtually "at my fingertips" is an incredible comfort to me and those I serve. The networking and training opportunities afforded by the NCSL Annual Meeting and the NALIT Professional Development Seminar cannot be matched, as far as I'm concerned, in terms of specific value to Legislative Information Technology professionals like us.



Of course, as with any endeavor, "you get out what you put in," and I think that is the creative and motivating challenge I want to present you with here. A number of NALIT committees are about to begin work on various projects including membership outreach, bylaws, and an award program. Likewise, new committees are due to be formed to help shape the program of the Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA and the next Professional Development Seminar in Harrisburg, PA. Later in the year, calls for NALIT officer and Staff Achievement award nominations will come out that deserve your consideration. Opportunities for involvement also exist with the NCSL standing committees and the NCSL Executive Committee.

The challenge of continued professional development exists in recognizing opportunities and taking advantage of them. I strongly believe that NALIT and NCSL offer such opportunities and would encourage you to consider making a contribution. As always, I am available for questions, comments, or volunteers, so please feel free to get in touch. I would also like to wish you a successful 2003 legislative session, and I look forward to seeing many of you again, or for the first time, in San Francisco and/or Harrisburg this year.

The new Standing Committees are off and running

Submitted by:
Steve Miller, Wisconsin

The recent restructuring of NCSL's committee organization will provide new opportunities for legislative staff participation. Last summer, the Conference merged the Assembly on State Issues (ASI) and Assembly on Federal Issues (AFI) into a single body known as the Standing Committees of NCSL. The fifteen standing committees address the major policy areas that legislatures face.

Formerly, the AFI developed policy for NCSL, underlying NCSL's Congressional lobbying agenda. The ASI served primarily as a mechanism for information exchange between states and for training. Both AFI and ASI were comprised of several committees and taskforces, with quite a bit of duplication in subject matter. Staff participated only in the former ASI, and not in the AFI. The merger breaks down this artificial separation between federal and state issues.

Typical work products of the committees will include books, Web pages, sessions at the Annual Meeting, Power Point presentation files, and a variety of other outputs including recommendations for NCSL policy statements. Such policy statements, once adopted at the Annual Meeting, become the basis for NCSL's Congressional lobbying program. Under NCSL rules, staff may

participate in every phase of committee work except voting on policy. The reorganization recognizes staff's important role in interpreting and implementing federal policy.

The new committee structure serves as a complement to the staff section structure. While staff sections are organized by professional discipline, such as fiscal analysis, legal services, clerks, and so forth, the standing committees address policy areas, such as transportation, education, banking, or energy. Each of the 15 standing committees addresses matters of interest to some, but perhaps not all, staff.

The reorganization will strengthen NCSL in a number of ways. With fewer overall committees, NCSL's resources can focus on the primary issues facing

legislatures. Under the new structure, legislative staff may contribute to the issues agenda. Also, in the simplified structure, there will be better coordination between NCSL's information exchange function and training activities with the policy agenda.

By time this issue goes to press, a series of letters will have been sent to new legislative leaders in every state, as well as to agency staff directors, soliciting appointments to the various committees. To get involved, you should review the jurisdiction of the various committees for subjects in



Connecting America
San Francisco, California

your interest area. Let your legislative leaders or staff directors know of your interests. Travel is not required for participation. A great deal is accomplished by telephone conference and e-mail.

Of course, if you can travel, you should consider attending the next meeting of the Standing Committees in Boston, April 25-27. Some of the sessions planned for Boston include: Privacy and e-mail; wetlands, watersheds, and mercury pollution; emergency preparedness and smallpox vaccinations; education of poll workers; and Internet voting. For a full description of the sessions in Boston, see NCSL's Web site, www.ncsl.org. A Web page fully describing the Boston meeting will be posted soon on that site.

NCSL's NEW STANDING COMMITTEES:

- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Budgets and Revenue
- Communications, Technology and Interstate Commerce
- Economic Development, Trade and Cultural Affairs
- Education
- Energy and Electric Utilities
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Financial Services
- Health
- Human Services and Welfare
- Labor and Workforce Development
- Law and Criminal Justice
- Legislative Effectiveness and State Government
- Redistricting and Elections
- Transportation

HANDOUTS ONLINE

Handouts from the 2002 PDS in Sparks are now available
on the NALIT website

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/handouts.htm#2002pds>



EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings all! I hope everyone is staying warm this blistering cold winter season (no comment friends from Hawaii). First, I must apologize for the delay in distribution of the newsletter. Our fall and winter months have been hectic here in PA! New Governor, new Members and a new technology refresh cycle! Can you say AHHHHHHH! That all said the newsletter is here and I feel good that I am fulfilling my secretarial duties.

*I must admit, serving as Secretary has been a challenging endeavor. I should have known when all who held the title so graciously informed me prior. Nevertheless, it has also been a rewarding one as well. I have enjoyed working on this publication and look forward to creating our summer edition. I am so happy to be involved in the NALIT family and to serve in various committees. Hint, hint, nudge, nudge, **you too** can get involved!*

We here in PA are gearing up for the Fall PDS. We are working on some fantastic things and already have "sponsoring" vendors that are willing to participate (I know that makes Pam happy!). We hope all of you can make it! Paul, you may want to start booking passage now if you are still under travel restrictions. I understand they have a trolley service from Minnesota to Pennsylvania at a low price. Their website states it will get you to PA in just under two weeks!

Enough rhetoric from me, enjoy the newsletter and enjoy the rest of your winter (yeah right)! Talk to you this summer!

*Todd A. Jewell
Secretary, NALIT Executive Committee*

SPECIAL THANKS:

As promised, a special thanks and treat to those that submitted articles pictures or ideas to this edition of the newsletter. Those listed below can expect to receive a GIANT size Hershey bar in the weeks ahead. Again, thank you and enjoy the chocolate!



**Michael Adams, Colorado
Maryann Trauger, North Dakota
Allan Smith, Nevada
Scott Darnell, South Dakota
Ginger Gutting, Virginia
Pam Greenberg, Denver
Marie Howe, Florida
Jeanne Wainwright, Florida
Steve Miller, Wisconsin**

State News:

NORTH DAKOTA CONVERTS ADMINISTRATIVE RULES TO XML

Submitted by: Maryann Trauger

North Dakota has completed the conversion of the Administrative Code from the legacy mainframe ATMS system to XML, the standards-based markup language.

The code is posted to the Legislative Branch home page in PDF format and updated monthly. Prints of sections on the home page exactly match the official

published code. It is single- and multiple-word searchable using dtSearch which is the search engine available on the Legislative Branch home page.

Agencies retrieve copies of the Administrative Code sections from the home page. They use a customized Microsoft Word application to make modifications using overstrike to remove language and underscore to add text. The agencies can print the sections for

publication for input by the public and then can submit them electronically to the Legislative Council.

These sections then are combined into an Administrative Rules Committee report for review. They also are processed with automatic removal of the overstruck language and underscore codes to create the monthly supplement.

A Laws Implemented Table is updated automatically at the time of processing.

The on-line system eliminates agencies having to maintain a database of their rules, rekeying of rules, and many paper copies.

The software used includes Arbortext's Epic Editor and Print Composer, Microsoft Windows 2000 Server Software, and IBM WebSphere Application Server Software."

Kennedy School : NALIT Source for 'Intel ligent and Committed IT Support for Legisl atures'

Submitted by:
Pam Greenberg, Denver

A new report issued by the Harvard Policy Group on Network-Enabled Services and Government at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government recognizes NALIT as an example of "intelligent and committed IT support for legislatures." The report, *Eight Imperatives for Leaders in a Networked World-Imperative 8: Prepare*

for Digital Democracy, explores challenges that the growth of computer networking brings to democratic governance, and how governments can respond by increasing both the breadth and depth of citizen participation in democratic processes.

The report identifies providing intelligent and committed IT support for legislatures as an important component of preparing

democracy for a digital world. The report says of NALIT:

"This group, like many associations, supports the identification and dissemination of best practices. By evaluating IT issues of particular relevance to legislative bodies, by giving out awards to leading practitioners, and by supporting conferences and seminars, NALIT has witnessed and supported a flowering of IT-based support

for legislative bodies. Harnessing the indexing power of intelligent systems, legislators, staff, and even the general public can much more efficiently find research and information than was possible before."

The full report is available at www.ksg.harvard.edu/stratcom/hpg/imp8.pdf. Background information on the full series of reports is at www.ksg.harvard.edu/stratcom/hpg.

Executive Committee Officers

2002-2003 Executive Committee: from left Maryann Trauger, Vice-chair, Michael Adams, Chair and Todd Jewell, Secretary.



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Mark Your Calendar for Upcoming NALIT Meetings

NALIT at the NCSL Annual Meeting
July 21 - 27, 2003

San Francisco, California

July 20 - 24, 2004

Salt Lake City, Utah

August 14 - 21, 2005

Seattle, Washington

NALIT Professional Development Seminars



October 1 - 5, 2003
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

September 8 - 12, 2004
Burlington, Vermont

October 5 - 9, 2005
Rapid City, South Dakota