N A L I T

National Association of Legislative Information Technology

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National Conference of State Legislatures ◆ 7700 E. First Place ◆ Denver, CO 80203 ◆ (303) 364-7700

CHAIR'S CORNER by Gary Wieman

Greetings to all for a happy, prosperous, and educational new year!! As we are all well aware, it takes time to keep up with all the new technologies, both good and bad. There are so many exciting advancements in hardware and software, methods of storing data, programming techniques; and alternatively the not so fun activities such as security patches, viruses, and all forms of malware. Balance all that with the demands of your legislative clientele and you realize that your task can be quite daunting.

We are always looking for information on how to perform our tasks better, which is why we associate ourselves with an organization such as NALIT. Through NALIT we have the means to ask questions by sending an e-mail to the listserve, looking through previous presentations at NCSL meetings or PDSs, or checking through the on-line survey. It is always reassuring to see that a project you were considering has been tried, and here are some of the good points and bad points that were encountered.

With all the difficulties and questions encountered in the course of designing and implementing a legislative IT project, it is no wonder that international organizations are being formed so that national legislatures can share information. In November Jim Greenwalt and I had the opportunity make presentations at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, Tunisia. At the summit the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) launched the Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments (http://www.ictparliament.org/), an alliance of organizations to promote technology in legislative bodies. My presentation was about the role NALIT plays in providing information to state legislatures, and the means that we have for disseminating this information. Jim's presentation was from an NCSL International perspective, and what NCSL International has done to assist countries to improve countries legislative processes. We also had discussions with the chief technical advisor of the Africa i-Parliament Action Plan (http://www.ictparliament.org/servizio/937/1100/938/mappa.asp), another UNDESA-sponsored organization that is assisting nine African countries in building legislative information systems from the ground up with capabilities of data sharing among the participating countries. It was a very interesting and educational experience from which I hope will develop a beneficial relationship in solving common legislative problems.

The NCSL Annual Meeting Planning and NALIT PDS Planning groups will start meeting soon to discuss the agendas for our upcoming meetings. The NCSL annual meeting will be held in Nashville, TN, August 15-19. The NALIT PDS will be held together with the Legislative Information and Communication Staff Section (LINCS) in Washington, DC, October 9-14. If you have any ideas for topics or places to visit that you would like to see on the agenda, please contact Jim Greenwalt, PDS Planning Chair, Pam Greenberg, or myself.

If you have other ideas that will be useful in promoting NALIT and our causes, please do not hesitate in letting Pam or myself know. Also, there are openings on committees that need to be filled, so please let us know if you are interested. Hope to see or hear from you soon.

Gary Wieman
Chair/Vice Chair, NALIT Executive Committee

Inside this issue:

South Dakota Adds New E-mail Feature to MyLRC

By Scott Darnall

"MyLRC" is South Dakota's Internet-based bill tracking list and e-mail notification system. In addition to bill tracking lists, users can maintain lists of committees, statutes, and administrative rules. Our new e-mail feature works with the statute list. It notifies users when bills are posted that affect statutes on their lists. For example, if a bill amends statute 1-1-1, users with Title 1, Chapter 1-1, or Section 1-1-1 in their statute lists receive e-mail. This works the same for bills that add new sections or repeal sections of the statutes.

I initially got (stole) the idea when talking with someone at the NALIT PDS a few years ago. (I believe it was someone from Indiana. Sorry if I'm crediting the wrong state.) At that time we already had the statute list option in MyLRC, just not the e-mail feature. We also had data on which sections of the code were being added, amended, and repealed, so it was not very difficult to take the next step and add the e-mail option.

> **IN ORDER FOR THE NEW FEATURE TO BE RELIABLE, THE "SECTIONS AFFECTED" TABLE HAD TO BE AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE.**

The first thing I did was to add some additional error checks to the bill save process to help ensure the data in the sections affected table was accurate. We use WordPerfect for our bill drafting and style codes to pull data for the sections affected table. It is easy for users to delete tags accidentally in the documents, which results in data being missed in this table. In order for the new feature to be reliable, this table had to be as accurate as possible. The new error checks added less than a second to the save process on most bills, so it was not an inconvenience for our staff. We also use this data to build our Session Laws; the additional checks give our staff a better base to start from and saves them time after session.

With the additional checks in place the rest was easy. I added a check box for the e-mail option to the Statutes screen in MyLRC, and wrote the program that sends the e-mail messages. Because users can add Titles, Chapters, or Sections to their lists, the SQL statements were interesting, and I did end up using an intermediate table in the process. Users receive one message for each bill. A sample message may look like this.

- SB 1 has been posted and could change these statutes on your list.
- Section 1, Statute 1-1-1, amended
- Section 4, Statute 1-2, new section added
- Section 6, Statute 1-3-4, repealed

This new feature did not get a lot of use during the 2005 Session. We had over 2,500 users create or use MyLRC pages during the 2005 Session, and 60 of those signed up for the new e-mail feature. The people I have talked with indicate it is very handy, and we expect the usage to grow over the next few sessions. If you have any questions please let me know.

On a side note, it was great to see so many people at the NALIT PDS in Rapid City this year. It was a lot of fun hosting and we hope everyone enjoyed their stay in South Dakota.

Projects With Less-Than-Stellar Outcomes: Implementing Systems Management Services

By Duncan Goss

Some IT projects work out spectacularly well. Some are total disasters. Others are not disasters, but are not totally successful, either. While describing your spectacularly successful projects is great for the ego, and listening to someone else's total disaster is very entertaining, important lessons can be learned by looking at projects that land somewhere in the middle. Call them "Projects With Less-than-Stellar Outcomes."

During the summer of 2005, the Vermont Legislature's IT department, with the help of outside contractors, implemented Microsoft's Systems Management Services (SMS). This implementation did not go anywhere nearly as smoothly as we would have liked.

Within the State House complex (which in Vermont means the State House and one Victorian building next door), we have about 140 workstations. From 2001 to 2005, approximately half of those workstations were thin client machines accessing a Citrix server farm. The Citrix system was popular with the IT staff; by installing a software update or a configuration change on the Citrix farm, we automatically updated 70-plus workstations.

However, the Citrix system was distinctly unpopular with users. Users disliked the locked-down interface, which could not be customized to match their individual styles. They wanted to use USB drives and PDAs, and they wanted to listen to audio CDs. Also, we were never able to get our applications to work quite as well on the Citrix servers as on a standalone workstation.

WE WERE TOLD THE PRODUCT WOULD ALLOW US TO PUSH SOFTWARE UPDATES AND CONFIGURATION CHANGES FROM A CENTRAL LOCATION TO THE ENTIRE NETWORK.

We contracted with a local network engineering company to help us design a replacement system that would allow us to deploy full-function workstations to all users, while retaining the ease of administration that we enjoyed while using Citrix. (We continue to use Citrix for remote access.)

The contractor recommended Systems Management Services. This product, we were told, would allow us to push software updates and configuration changes from a central location to the entire network quickly and easily. The proposed operating model was very attractive; the cost of the software and installation was reasonable, and we accepted the consultant's recommendation.

The actual installation of the software went very smoothly. The contractor's engineer updated our Active Directory setup to Windows Server 2003, installed two new Active Directory controllers, and installed SMS on a server we had purchased for the purpose. This all went extremely well.

The difficulties began when the engineer started to create SMS packages to deploy applications and software patches. While our software suite is not particularly complex or unusual, we kept running into problems. Techniques which the engineer assured us should work "in theory" (a phrase we soon came to detest), for one reason or another just would not work. At the end of the two weeks of on-site time that the contract called for, we had only managed to package Acrobat Reader successfully.

Our staff worked with SMS for several additional weeks on their own. They became quite proficient at deploying complete workstation images, with our software suite pre-installed. During a later on-site visit, the engineer provided us with a different packaging tool, which allowed us to successfully package all but five of our programs, which (of course) were the most critical and widely used applications.

At this point we asked for a meeting with the contractor's management, noting that, despite a significant investment in hardware, software, installation, configuration and training, we had nothing resembling a production-ready system.

The contractor agreed that more work was needed to bring the project to a successful conclusion, and brought in, at their expense, an outside expert from Boston. This person is responsible for developing a wide variety of deployment packages for a 4,000-workstation network, and so had a wealth of real-world experience.

From the start, it was clear that this person had an extraordinary understanding of the inner workings of SMS, Windows, InstallShield, and other installers, etc. He was able to create packages for our remaining five applications. However, creating these five packages took five days, and required five very different and very difficult techniques. During this process, he told us that, in his experience, developing and fully testing a package for a new software application could easily take from three days to a week or more.

But, by the end of his time with us, we had come up with a workable plan for operation. We are deploying the applications used by all users (the most complex and troublesome applications, as it happens) as part of the configured workstation image, and will selectively deploy other applications as needed to the appropriate users using SMS packages. We are still working on the Windows patch issue.

This is not a very efficient operating model, but it at least gets us off the ground. As of mid-November, we have successfully upgraded the entire State House from Windows 2000 to Windows XP using SMS, and we have selectively deployed minor applications to a number of users. This is progress.

So, what went wrong?

First, the application packaging and deployment process is far more complex than we had anticipated. SMS provides an extraordinary level of control, but the level of detailed knowledge that is required to effectively exploit this power greatly exceeded our initial expectations.

Second, our standard software suite is not quite as “plain vanilla” as we originally believed. We use Microsoft Office, which by itself is easier to package than some applications. However, our document management system (Hummingbird DM) hooks into Microsoft Office at a very low level, and this turns out to be quite tricky to implement.

A further complication is our use of Novell GroupWise instead of Microsoft Outlook. To work correctly, these two applications and our document management application have to be deployed as a unit. Were we a pure Microsoft shop, the environment would be much simpler.

Finally, SMS may not have been the right tool for an operation of our size. To install an update manually to each of our 140 workstations takes us two or three days, depending on the size of the installation. It currently takes us at least as long or longer to develop, test, and deploy a software package to do the same thing using SMS.

As we gain more experience with the packaging process, and with the available packaging tools, the process will no doubt become somewhat easier and faster, but we do not see it becoming routine anytime soon.

We might have done better to continue to use Ghost to deploy configured workstation images while using a simpler product, such as Windows Update Services, to handle the (ever-more-frequent) Windows patches.

Our contractor believes that the “break-even point” (the point at which it becomes faster to deploy applications with SMS than to deploy them to individual workstations manually) is somewhere around 50 workstations. Based on our experience to date, we would place the break-even point at somewhere around 250 machines. The Boston expert’s estimates for package development time may push the break-even point as high as 500 workstations. However, his company has unusually high testing requirements.

So where do we go from here?

The SMS product as installed does work, and we are able to make at least rudimentary use of it. The reporting tools and other management features of SMS are extremely valuable in their own right. However, to bring us to full productivity in application management clearly will require a Phase II.

During the summer of 2006, we will attempt to bring the SMS expert back on site for an additional period of development and knowledge transfer. By that time we will have a full year of SMS experience to draw upon, and can focus upon the finer points of application packaging, patch management, etc.

(My staff has suggested that a couple of weeks of formal classroom training in, say, Hawaii would be a viable alternative.)

Given the size and complexity of SMS, taking two years for full deployment is not unreasonable.

Despite all of the difficulties we experienced with this project, I am pleased with our vendor's performance and integrity. While, in hindsight, we may question the appropriateness of its original recommendation, when problems developed, the contractor stood behind its work, bringing in an outside expert at its own (very considerable) expense. This is a degree of customer service that will keep us coming back in the years to come.

I am also very pleased with our staff's performance during this project. Despite multiple failures and enormous frustrations, they kept beating on the product until it submitted, at least for the limited uses to which we are currently putting it. The experience they have acquired will serve us very well in the future, both in SMS operations and in the broader IT environment.

Florida's Legistore–Efficiently Serving Its Customers Puts Cash in the Till

By Jenny Wilhelm

Although most states outsource statute publication, Florida is one of the few states that publishes its own statutes. Florida also continually revises its statutes, codifying general laws passed by the Legislature each year, and the process is one of the largest in the country. The Florida Legislature's Office of Legislative Services (OLS) and the Division of Statutory Revision (DSR) are charged with publishing and distributing the Florida Statutes. OLS sets a price covering the costs for printing, binding, and shipping the statutes, in addition to most of the costs for DSR's staff of 26 attorneys, editors, proofreaders, and support personnel.

DSR's Law Book Services Office handles orders for publication, both mail orders with checks and credit card payments made at its online store, the Legistore. The Legistore provides a convenient way for government agencies, law firms, and libraries to purchase statutes and other legislative publications using credit cards.

What does Legistore offer its customers?

From its beginnings in 2001 as a way to sell statutes and laws more conveniently, the Legistore has added products from several legislative divisions and offices, including:

- reprints of popular chapters of the Florida Statutes;

- finding aids published by DSR such as specialized indexes;

- the Bill Information "Citator" (a publication that summarizes legislative activity in a given year);

- selected Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses;
- the Florida Government Accountability Report (an annually updated encyclopedia of state programs describing a program's purpose, operation, funding, current issues, and contact information); and
- lobbyist registration address labels.

LEGISTORE'S INCOME IS 12% OF THE LAW BOOKS SERVICES OFFICE TOTAL RECEIPTS.

What are the advantages of Legistore?

A legislative publications on-line store has several advantages.

- The cost to process credit card transactions is lower than the cost in staff hours to process checks.
- Customers input their own information into a database.
- The store is open 24 x 7. This is especially important for a two-time zone state like Florida.
- There is instant authorization of credit cards, expediting the product fulfillment process.
- The technology is proven–it includes a website with a shopping cart that uses SSL authentication. Staff do not have access to customer credit card numbers.

How are the finances handled?

Thanks to the State Treasury's contract with Bank of America to handle back-end processes for all state agency credit card purchases, the Legistore's credit card processing charges are lower than those paid by many small businesses in the private sector. Other associated costs for operating an online store are covered by receipts from sales of publications. Legistore revenues are deposited in the OLS account in the State Treasury. The Legistore's administrator reconciles all the transactions and receipts and authorizes payment of operational expenses.

Results

So far the results of Legistore have been promising.

- For the last two fiscal years the Legistore's income was approximately $240,000 per fiscal year–about 12% of the Law Books Services Office total receipts for publication sales during the period.
- As of October in Fiscal Year 2005-06, the Legistore's receipts were $163,000, over $50,000 more than for the same time frame last fiscal year. This amount is approximately 15% of the total publication sales for this fiscal year.
- Customers are able to order at any time of day, use government agency or firm purchasing cards, and with real-time card authorization they receive their order much sooner than they would have by mailing in an order with a check.

Susan Healy, Program Administrator for the Law Book Services Office, says, "We went through a lengthy and involved birthing, but now the Legistore has become a vital way to get publications and information out to the public and other government agencies."

You can access the Legistore at www.leg.state.fl.us. For more information, e-mail Susan Healy at healy.susan@leg.state.fl.us.

LSMI: New and Improved!

LSMI Legislative Staff Management Institute

By Gary Vanlandingham
Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
By David Pray
Mississippi Program Evaluation and Expenditure Review Committee

How many times have you gone into a store and seen a familiar product with "New Formula" or "Improved" splashed on the label? How many times did you buy the product thinking that the only thing "new" or "improved" was the label?

Well, the Legislative Staff Management Institute (LSMI), which the authors attended in the summer of 2005, has a new "California Style" that really takes the program to new heights. The new program builds on the foundation established by its former sponsor, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The Humphrey Institute set a high standard and established LSMI as NCSL's premier legislative staff training program in the nation.

The University of Southern California and California State University, Sacramento, have teamed up to provide an eight-day program that provides staff with a wide range of effective management tools for facing and addressing the complex issues found in state legislatures. These include interpersonal and organizational communication, team building, coaching, negotiation, networking, and managing organizational culture. The program uses a series of high-energy trainers who build on each other's work to provide a highly integrated but broad-spanning curriculum.

Everyone has been through excruciatingly dull team building and communication seminars. However, the fast-paced, hands-on sessions offered at LSMI don't give participants a chance to get bored. For example, the very first session brought team building to a new level with a "Bio-Hazard" exercise in which teams had to learn quickly to perform together or "die." Another session introduced the class to new concepts in organizational communication with a "Meta-4" exercise in which participants had to form teams quickly and then negotiate how these teams could work together toward a common goal. Other hands-on exercises taught key negotiation skills applied to a variety of settings (we will never buy cars or houses in the same way again!).

LSMI participants got a chance to put these team building, communication, and listening concepts to practice in rafting down the south fork of the American River. Nothing enhances team building like being in a rubber raft with five or six other people and hurtling down Class IV whitewater rapids–breakdowns in communication and strategy can produce immediate (and wet) results!

The program provided personalized feedback through a session on effective leadership. As part of this session, participants received a Leadership Effectiveness Assessment based on a survey that participants and the people who work for them completed prior to attending LSMI. These assessments were always helpful, sometimes painful, in highlighting the areas of strengths and weaknesses of each participant's leadership skills.

Two caveats that alumni of previous LSMI programs always seem to mention were living in a college dormitory at the University of Minnesota and "dorm food." Mention no more! The California program, which takes place at the University of Southern California's Capital Center in Sacramento, houses participants at a four-star hotel located about six blocks from the training center. Breakfast and lunch were catered from some of the excellent local eateries, and the group dined each night at one of the superb downtown restaurants. Other highlights were an afternoon trip into San Francisco and dinner at Fisherman's Wharf, and attending a local minor league game (we rooted, rooted, rooted for the home team, but they did not win, which was a shame).

One thing that has not changed about LSMI is the opportunity to meet other legislative staff from around the country and make new friends. Because the LSMI participants come from a wide variety of states and positions (including partisan and nonpartisan offices, leadership, information systems, administration, evaluation/audit, fiscal, legal, and research), we learned much from each other. We also created a network of friends that we can call upon in the future.

Overall, the "new and improved" LSMI was a wonderful and highly valuable experience. We encourage all offices to consider sending middle- and upper-level staff to the 2006 program. If demand allows (the 2005 program received 39 applications for 30 available slots), the sponsors may be able to provide two sessions per year in future years. It is an opportunity not to be missed!

The 2006 LSMI will take place July 15-22, 2006. For more information, go to http://www.ncsl.org/public/lsmi/index.htm.

Louisiana Replaces 25-Year-Old VAX/VMS Systems

By Gary Schaefer
(with assistance from PSA)

Since 1980 the Louisiana Senate used a computer system, which was designed and developed by Public Systems Associates, Inc. (PSA). In 1994 the Louisiana House of Representatives began using this system as well. The system worked very well and met the needs of the Legislature. However, the system's initial framework pre-dated Microsoft Windows and ran on the VAX/VMS platform and later included client-server PCs. Twenty-five years after initial installation, the system has translated into high support and maintenance costs, as well as limited flexibility.

Also, over the last 25 years, many advances in PC technology and the proliferation of laptops, the Internet, and video streaming have occurred. Working with PSA over the years, we utilized all of these advances. However, this resulted in many different applications and automated processes which moved data between separate databases. This worked fairly well, although there were some occasional problems.

ACCOMPLISHING THIS WAS GOING TO BE A MONUMENTAL TASK. INSTEAD OF JUST BUILDING THE SAME SYSTEM WITH NEWER TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY, WE WANTED A MORE INTEGRATED, AUTOMATED, AND PROCESS-ORIENTED SYSTEM.

So, it was time to upgrade. We decided to move away from the VAX/VMS platform, which was the cornerstone of our computer system, and move toward a single, centralized, relational database with tightly integrated applications. Accomplishing this was going to be a monumental task. Instead of just building the same system with newer tools and technology, we decided it would be best to work with PSA and design a more integrated, automated, and process-oriented system. A primary goal of this system was to eliminate as much duplicate entry as possible while maintaining confidentiality, security, and stability.

The new suite of applications, built by PSA and dubbed "LEGISuite," went into production prior to our 2005 Regular Session and has been successful, especially considering the enormity of the implementation. This was possible only by in-depth collaboration between talented and dedicated legislative staff and PSA personnel.

LEGISuite has a number of modules, which address virtually all aspects of our legislative process.

Task Organizer is the primary interface for the majority of legislative staff. Users enter information about requests for legislation. These requests are routed, via an internal messaging system, to designated division administrators. The administrators assign various tasks, which may include drafting, checking, proofing, corrections, and finally transmittal of the finished product to the requesting legislator. For the 2005 Regular Session, the system tracked over 8,500 legislative requests.

Task Organizer is tightly integrated with LEGISuite Drafting components, which are in turn well integrated with our word processor of choice, WordPerfect. Once a user tells the system what kind of document he/she intends to create, the application creates a skeleton document with the appropriate formatting, standard language, and mechanisms for synchronizing the database with updates the drafter makes. When a draft is started, the application automatically updates the skeleton document with information, which was captured when the request was entered, for example, legislation type ("Senate Bill," "House Resolution," "Senate Committee Amendment," "Conference Committee Report"), request tracking information, author and coauthor(s), keyword, and instrument summary.

Once the document is generated from the data on the request card and opened, the user has the full functionality of the word processor at his/her disposal. Our users needed the ability and freedom to use features like hanging indents, tab sets, headers, footers, numbering (page and line), spell checking, and copy/paste from historical documents. Such features were either unavailable or were too difficult to use in XML editors. We considered Microsoft Word; we chose WordPerfect, however, because we had been using it for years, were very comfortable with its functionality, and used reveal codes for editing documents created by other users. This fit very well with the requirement that the system be very easy to use.

The LEGISuite Drafting components integrate with the WordPerfect menu options to provide the user additional functionality, which includes:

- Document Data–a form-based applet that allows the user to change document metadata such as the author, coauthor(s), keyword, and instrument summary.

- Insert Bill Section–a Windows Explorer interface used to insert "standard" language, such as effective date, repealer and severability clauses.

- Insert Statute Section–provides the user with a quick and easy interface to insert existing statute language into the document.

- LSS (LEGISuite Search System)–a robust application for text searching and term-highlighting on statute and code documents, as well as prior and current legislation.

- Document Management System–a number of interfaces to the integrated DMS.

When the system creates the initial draft document, it automatically includes data from the database, names it appropriately, and temporarily stores the document on the drafter's PC. When the user chooses to save the document to the DMS on the server, LEGISuite names and files the document and updates the Oracle database with changes made on the document data card, all automatically. For example, the drafter may have added coauthors and changed the keyword or instrument summary. The system captures the changes in data thereby eliminating duplicate entry and human error.

The integrated Document Management System includes security that maintains document confidentiality until the point at which the user elects to move the document to the next step in the drafting process. Even then, access to the document is tightly restricted to those who need access to it. The security with the DMS is customized to the process of drafting and tracking legislation.

Once a drafter completes the task, he/she uses Task Organizer to mark it as complete. The system automatically routes the document to the next user in the process, based on a work flow established when the request was created. Different types of documents have different types of default work flows, and the administrators can modify the work flows. The updating and routing process continues as each person works on the document until the request is ready to be introduced.

The same applications are utilized to draft legislation, amendments, conference committee reports, letters, speeches, and any other type of document users need to create. In addition, engrossing staff use these same systems to engross and enroll legislation. This provides consistency, regardless of the type of document being created.

Once a request is complete and the legislator is ready to prefile or introduce the legislation, it is submitted to the House Clerk or Senate Secretary for numbering. The system manages the pools of numbers by instrument type and the assignment of those numbers. The Clerk and Secretary can designate that certain instruments receive a specific instrument number. For example, the budget bill is always House Bill 1.

Once the system numbers an instrument, numerous software processes occur automatically. The newly assigned number is inserted into the WordPerfect document, a PDF version of the document is created, and the document is published on the Internet.

Introduced legislation is tracked via the Bill Status Entry application wherein the appropriate users advance legislation through the legislative process in real time. The data entry mechanisms for this application provide the user with the next logical actions that are to occur on the instrument (e.g., refer to committee, pass 3rd reading) based on the rules of the body.

AS LEGISLATION IS CONSIDERED, INTERFACES WITH THE DAKTRONICS VOTING SYSTEM AND OUR COMMITTEE MANAGER APPLICATION DIRECT LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT, THE LEGISLATIVE WEBSITE, AND OUR PLASMA/LCD DISPLAY SYSTEMS TO REFLECT WHAT LEGISLATION IS CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED.

At any point in the process, authorized staff may generate an updated Order of the Day using bill status information. In Louisiana, the Order of the Day is a listing of instruments in the order of business to be heard. The Order of the Day is updated continuously through the Bill Status Entry application. Once the new Order of the Day is complete, it is made available to legislators and staff via LEGISlative Assistant and to the public via the Legislative Website.

Legislators in Louisiana have laptop computers on which they have a LEGISuite Portal application installed. This gives them quick access to announcements, bill tracking information, news, and the LEGISlative Assistant application. LEGISlative Assistant provides the legislators with an interactive Order of the Day (House or Senate) or committee agenda. As legislation is considered, interfaces from both the Daktronics voting system and our Committee Manager application direct LEGISlative Assistant, the Legislative Website, and our Plasma/LCD Display Systems to reflect what legislation is currently being discussed. Furthermore, this information (e.g., instrument type and number, author) is integrated into the video streams that are webcast on our Intranet, the Internet, and are broadcast on local and statewide television by Louisiana Public Broadcasting. Integration allows the video stream to include the instrument type and number, primary author, and keyword of the legislation being discussed.

Legislators frequently receive e-mail from their constituents and telephone messages from the switchboard in regard to legislation. LEGISlative Assistant integrates with legislators' e-mail and the Telephone Switchboard application, and alerts them when a new message is received. It even automatically attaches e-mail to the specific bill it references.

Throughout this process, the LEGISuite Reporting application can be used to report on any information within the system (e.g., draft requests, introduced legislation). It consists of pre-defined reports as well as the ability for users to build their own ad-hoc reports. It maintains security, so users can see only the information they are allowed to view. It also provides drill-down capability to obtain more information, and includes links to instruments referenced on the report.

The committee process is integrated with other parts of LEGISuite. Committee staff use the Committee Manager application to track the committee process. This includes scheduling bills to be heard, creating committee agendas, and updating the display systems and the Legislature's Joint Website. They also record activity during the meeting, such as motions, votes, and amendments, and they produce post-hearing documents, such as committee reports and minutes.

As legislation is ordered to be engrossed or enrolled, the engrossing staff use the same Task Organizer application and LEGISuite Drafting components, which they used to proof, correct, and produce the "Original" version of legislative documents. These interfaces provide very quick access to amendments that passed, so that the text of the amendments may be used in the engrossing process.

The end result of this project is a suite of applications that met our original goal of migrating from the VAX/VMS platform, and in the process, has eliminated virtually all duplicate entry of information. Some other benefits to our users that help increase efficiency are:

- The system keeps users organized with the tasks they need to perform.
- The system handles document naming and filing. No naming conventions to remember and no documents misfiled.
- Users can easily include statute language into bill drafts.
- The system routes document requests based on the type of document. The user does not have to know or remember who handles the next step in the request.
- The system advises bill status entry staff of the next logical "action" to occur on the instrument, so staff have to remember fewer "action codes."
- Bill and amendment documents become available in all applications and on the Internet within seconds of being "marked" public.

Louisiana expects to reduce its IT maintenance costs, is now postured to take better advantage of advances in technology, and can adjust to procedural changes more easily with the successful implementation of its new system.

NALIT
This and That

By Pam Greenberg

NALIT's Web Site: Designed for You

The NALIT Home Page at www.ncsl.org/nalit is designed to provide simplified access to information through a streamlined navigation bar and a standardized layout. Here's a general guide to the NALIT home page.

Left Column: *Contents*

This section includes information about the NALIT organization, including an overview of the association, its by-laws, officers, and membership; links to past NALIT Newsletters, meeting presentations, and handouts; past award winners; information about NALIT listservs; and NALIT survey information. At the bottom of this column is a link to NALIT's eNews Sign Up, where you can register to receive e-mail notification when new content or updates are added to the NALIT Web Site.

Center Column: *News*

The section provides timely news items about the association, such as upcoming meetings, election of officers, new editions of the newsletter, and other information about the association's activities.

Right Column: *Featured Links*

Find information about legislative information technology topics and information by or about NALIT members, such as:

- Legislatures with wireless networks and wireless access for the public
- Legislatures that provide laptops for legislators' use in the chamber
- Legislatures that webcast and archive floor proceedings and committee hearings
- Legislatures with RSS feeds
- Legislative IT offices
- Articles or other resources about legislative information technology

This is *your* web site, so please offer suggestions for additional information to be included on the site and ideas for improvements. Also, check the charts and other information on the site to see if the data about your state is correct and up to date. Send your ideas, suggestions and updates for the site to pam.greenberg@ncsl.org.

NALIT Listserv

NALIT's Listserv is a valuable resource for sharing information. The listserv is open only to legislative staff and legislators. Some of the messages posted to the listserv in the past six months have addressed the following subjects:

- Application Development Projects
- Office 2003 Migration Issues
- Message Board Software
- Digital Signatures
- Devices for the Hearing Impaired
- Bill Drafting System Projects
- Technology in Committee Rooms
- Constituent Relationship Management Software
- Legislative Web Sites
- Podcasting

To sign up for the NALIT listserv, send an e-mail message to pam.greenberg@ncsl.org identifying yourself and your legislative affiliation and requesting a subscription to NALIT-L. You will receive an e-mail message that confirms your subscription and describes how to post messages and unsubscribe.

The listserv automatically screens out most autoreply messages, but some still get through, so please remember to configure your autoresponses so that "out-of-office" messages are not sent to the NALIT listserv address (nalit-l@ncsl.org).

Mark Your Calendar

NALIT 2006 NCSL Annual Meeting
Nashville, Tennessee, August 15-18, 2006

NALIT 10th Annual
Professional Development Seminar
October 9-14, 2006, Washington D.C.

Do you remember these NALIT Seminars?

1997	St. Paul, Minnesota
1998	Baton Rouge, Louisiana
1999	Sacramento, California
2000	Richmond, Virginia
2001	Springfield, Illinois
2002	Sparks, Nevada
2003	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
2004	Burlington, Vermont
2005	Rapid City, South Dakota

2005 NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Awards

By Dave Larson

The NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Award Committee is pleased to announce the two winners of the 2005 NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Award.

Tim Rice–Illinois

Tim Rice is the Executive Director of the Illinois Legislative Information System and an active NALIT member. Tim has always looked for ways to collaborate with fellow NALIT members. It was an e-mail from Tim posing the concept that perhaps states struggling with obsolete bill status systems should join forces and work together toward one common goal. The outcome of the suggestion was the Multi-State project. Although that concept was not completely realized, the spirit of Tim's idea is the embodiment of what NALIT is about. Further, as a result of this project, worthwhile dialogs were initiated between the states and helped form alliances between states with similar product goals.

Tim has also significantly affected the Illinois Legislature. Under Tim's leadership, Illinois has progressed through a four-year project, completely reengineering its comprehensive legislative information systems, including bill drafting and tracking. Every step of the way, Tim has offered to share his successes and failures to help colleagues in other states. Most recently, Tim and his staff developed an in-house voting system to replace its antiquated Daktronics system. As soon as it was operational, Tim offered to give all of his expertise and experiences to other states so that they did not have to reinvent the wheel.

Through these and many other examples, Tim has demonstrated a heartfelt commitment to the legislative institution and NALIT. With each accomplishment, Tim has shown himself to be a true leader, always stepping out of the spotlight, giving credit to his staff. NALIT is happy to present the 2005 NALIT Staff Achievement Award to Tim Rice.

Washington State Electronic Bill Book Team

The 2005 NALIT Staff Achievement Award is presented to a team of individuals from the Washington State House of Representatives' committee staff and legislative information technology staff, who developed an innovative project called the "Electronic Bill Book" or EBB.

The EBB has revolutionized the way in which the Washington House of Representatives' standing committees conduct public hearings. As the result of the EBB, the Washington House has reduced the labor-intensive work required to prepare pre-meeting informational packets and maintain paper bill books used in committee hearings. Committee members and staff are able to access the "bill book" documents and display them during the hearing in an electronic format.

In addition, the EBB has simplified the administration of complex committee hearings and has made it easier for committee members to navigate through the sometimes lengthy agendas. This important project is a great example of excellent teamwork between the committee and the information technology staff to provide a new and more efficient way of conducting committee business.

The project team members were:

<u>Office of Program Research team members</u>
Charlie Gavigan
Dave Knutson
Bob Longman
Cara Shipley (retired)

<u>Legislative Service Center team members</u>
Nate Naismith (retired)
Laura Graham
Sharon Maguire
Oscar Churchill
Kyle Overmiller

The annual Legislative Staff Achievement Award was created by the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee to recognize excellence in supporting the work of a state legislature and strengthening the legislative institution.

Each staff section associated with NCSL may name up to two recipients–individuals, teams or legislative offices–for recognition each year.

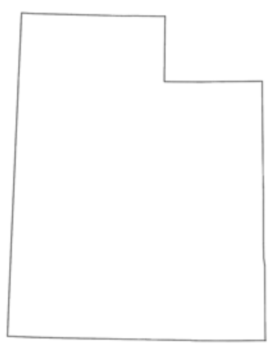
Please visit http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/nalit/award.htm for more details about qualifications and to view past winners.

NALIT Raises Funds for New Orleans Hurricane Victims

By Gary Schaefer

Dennis Loudermilk, from West Virginia, wanted to do something for the hurricane victims in New Orleans, Louisiana. Being an accomplished woodsmith, Dennis created a handcrafted wooden bowl, inlaid with a NALIT pin and alternating varieties of richly colored gleaming woods. Dennis brought the bowl to the NALIT PDS in South Dakota, so that it could be raffled, with all proceeds going to the relief effort in New Orleans. More than $200 was collected and the lucky winner was Nichole Dillon in Wyoming. The proceeds were donated to the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Inc.

Utah State Legislature Wins "Online Democracy Award"



By Gene Rose

Utah's state legislative web site won the first competition for state legislative web sites. It was recognized for design, content, and technology at the NCSL 2005 Annual Meeting.

Two national organizations, the Legislative Information and Communication Staff Section and the National Association for Legislative Information Technology, teamed up to recognize the Utah site during the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures. NCSL, a bipartisan organization made up of the nation's state legislators and legislative staff, held its annual meeting in August in Seattle.

NCSL Staff Chair Jim Greenwalt, of Minnesota, said the award was created to honor outstanding web sites that bring democracy closer to its citizens. "Our judges were impressed by Utah's integration of RSS feeds and multimedia streaming. The site's design is elegantly simple while effectively allowing users to navigate easily."

The Utah State Legislature web site is www.le.utah.gov.

Patches, Inventory and In-Your-Face Customer Service

By Mary Galligan

- Are there best practices for managing the update process?
- How do you get buy-in from management and users for updates?
- Should updates be done in-house or outsourced?

The Kansas Research Department's approach is an example of how a small technology support staff that does not develop or support many customized or in-house developed applications approaches those and related tasks. The questions above resolve to: How, What, Where, When, HOW?

Obviously, the most crucial tasks for keeping applications up to date involve maintaining appropriate security. When dealing with security updates, just do it and do it fast! The best practice involves monitoring vendors' sites, announcements and discussion groups. Staying on top of developments is the key to prevention. Industry experts have observed that the average time for exploitation of vulnerability is down to two days. Automated update services may seem like a work saver, until you discover, too late, that your users have not paid attention to update notices. So, do not depend on users. Push patches to workstations. Protect your assets and maintain a uniform, known environment.

For standard, non-critical, non-security patches, establish a regular schedule for installation, for example, once a quarter, once a month, or semi-annually. Build your schedule by taking into consideration your systems' availability requirements, system criticality, and available resources. However, recognize and build in flexibility because high priority applications and functions of those applications may warrant deviation from your schedule.

DEVELOPING A WORKABLE METHOD OF DEPLOYING UPDATES AND PATCHES MAY BE ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING PARTS OF THE EFFORT.

Test, test, test by installing the patch on a system that is as similar to your production environment as possible, and use the patched application like it is used in production. Be sure to test interactions with related applications, e.g., word processing application patches with the document management system and the publication/layout software. Once you have done that, test a bit more by finding a willing user-volunteer to use the patched application for several days in a production setting. For this round of testing, be sure to find someone who is tolerant–and do not undertake this activity during the session.

Developing a workable method of deploying updates and patches may be one of the most challenging parts of this effort. In some cases you need every workstation upgraded simultaneously, so enterprise software continues to function uniformly. For those instances and when you must install critical and security patches, automatic/remote updating is the only way to go. We have found that manual updating and patch-installation on the legislature's document management system software causes no end of problems with fundamental functions of that system and its integration with document production applications. As mentioned above, we download and push to workstations daily, if necessary, security and critical patches and virus pattern updates. There just is no other way to accomplish those important tasks.

The rest of our patching and updating is done manually. "But, wait," you say, "who has the time and patience for that?" Good question. We have developed a routine of monthly hands-on visits to all our workstations to fulfill a number of needs. We can do this in part because we are a small organization with the luxury of having three people on staff who have incorporated this work as part of their duties. Our support staff to computer ratio is approximately one to eleven.

By taking this approach, we have:

- Assurance that updates are installed in a relatively narrow time frame
- A regular opportunity to check the functioning of hardware
- A built-in means of maintaining our software and hardware inventories
- A conversational, regular opportunity to identify user needs
- A chance to perform general trouble shooting and to identify issues cropping up across the office

Our experience has been a general increase in acceptance of the inevitable changes to applications. We also see improvement in the collaborative relationship between users and their colleagues who provide technical support. When the going gets rough in mid-session, those changes can be more important than any amount of "efficient" hands-off patch deployment.

Legal Services: A First Step into the Cutting Edge

By Jody Rosner

In October 2001, the former Legislative Counsel, Bion Gregory, gave the green light to proceed with a project to replace the aging Legislative Counsel Bureau Automation System (LCBAS). The new project, to be called "Legal Services," would be built, tested and deployed using modern procedures and technologies. Given this mandate, a team was assembled to begin work on what was readily acknowledged as both a challenging and far-reaching effort.

After careful analysis of the work to be done by the team, and with the support of the new Legislative Counsel and Project Sponsor, Diane Boyer-Vine, the team and sponsor decided that the project could realistically be completed by November 15, 2004. This date would make the system available for the beginning of the 2005/2006 Legislative Session.

Several drivers prompted the replacement of LCBAS. Current system technology was obsolete (over 20 years old). It was unable to meet the changing and increasing business needs, and LCB needed new flexible and efficient tools. Of course, there was quite a bit of research before the first use case was created. Because the LDC was part of a NALIT Steering Committee, there were many visits to other states to see where each state was headed with its bill drafting systems. The team visited Virginia, Texas and Ohio, and gathered information from other states such as Illinois, Washington, Michigan, Florida, and Louisiana.

PROJECT STAFFING STRATEGY WAS A KEY SUCCESS ELEMENT IN DEVELOPING THE APPLICATION.

As you might imagine, there were many requirements for an application that does so many things! For example, there were 68 use cases (36 for Phase I and 32 for future phases), 746 functional requirements (307 for Phase I alone), 178 non-functional requirements, and 469 features (249 for Phase I). The team assessed potential enterprise services and looked in house for applications or modules to fit the needs of Legal Services. Also, there was a "buy-versus-build" decision. The team determined which portions of the application we would code and which COTS (commercial off-the- shelf) products were needed. Indeed, RFIs were sent out for tools such as workflow, publishing, editing, database repository, reporting, document comparison and spell-checker tools, security and development tools.

Project staffing strategy was a key success element in developing the application. In choosing the teams, for example, we chose individuals because they fit into some of the following categories: champions for technologies or products, displayed a willingness to challenge decisions and each other while continuing to be supportive, supported the view that the good of the many outweighed the good of the few, were team players, or developed an expertise in a single or in multiple fields or technologies. In the end, we also needed to augment the staff here at the LDC with consultants. The team size of this single project was very large. LDC staff and consultants numbered from an average of 26 people for the three-year period to peaks of 44. The LCB also participated heavily in the process and had an average of six people to a peak of 47 individuals!

Legal Services settled on using an iterative development process using the Feature Driven Process. There were multiple "builds" and then those were shown to the customer on a periodic basis and refined as necessary. This was an agile software process that decomposes and builds the software based on customer features. COTS products with customization combined with custom development were the norm for the multiple components of the Legal Services application. Several enterprise services were started with the application, including publishing, reporting, XML document model and even some security aspects. Multiple software packages were also customized, including XMetal (editor), Business Objects (reporting tool), TeamConnect (workflow), and RenderX (publishing).

> **A 3.5-MONTH PILOT WAS CONDUCTED TO ENSURE THAT THE END PRODUCT WAS CORRECT FOR THE LCB. OVER 40 LCB USERS WERE CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE.**

Of course, with all this great talent creating this new application, there were also some substantial business process improvements (BPI). A few of the BPIs are automated work flows (including historical information that was not previously available); creation of new drafts that would be facilitated with easy “drag and drop” of codes and other text sources; real-time reports (workload, productivity, custom, ad hoc with automated delivery, if desired); and security enhancements. Other process improvements include WYSIWIG, user-friendly menus, the attorneys and support staff now use the same system (before they were in multiple separate systems, and therefore could not share documents and notes very easily, if at all); reduction in training hours required, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A 3.5-month pilot was conducted to ensure that the end product was correct for the LCB. Over 40 LCB users participated. Hands-on training was provided to get them started and to help them along the way. In addition, the LDC Training Unit provided on-site assistance, as well as LDC developers, and we established a pilot lab in which further group or individual training could take place –or people could just “play” with the system to get used to it. Pilot participants used PVCS Tracker to log their bugs. Overall, it was very successful, and helped bridge any gaps between customer needs.

Production rollout training was very intense. LDC had two months to train over 200 end-users in order to make them proficient on the day of live rollout. The team did a good job by providing classes, one-on-one sessions and numerous follow-up sessions as required. The roles played by the LDC Training unit, the call center, the technical staff who developed the various parts of Legal Services, as well as the various consultants were crucial to ensuring that the LCB staff were productive while grappling with the various learning curves any organization experiences when attempting a massive change.

Finally, all the documents that resided in LCBAS needed to be converted, because documents were stored in a different format than the XML Legal Services was going to use. Over 350,000 were converted, a very large number by almost any standard. It turned out that there were surprisingly few errors during this conversion. This effort included such things as the California codes and constitution, statutes, measures, bill drafts, ACA/ACR/SCR/AJR/SRJ/HR/SR drafts, initiatives, instruction amendments, 26.5 digest, enrolled bill reports and senior legislative proposals.

Deployment of the application was the final set of tasks. Coordination was the key to success, and included sign-off by QC and Acceptance Testing, user training, system administration training, hardware/software configurations, disaster recovery testing, mainframe components, desktop install/configurations, the loading of converted data, operational testing, and the final load/performance testing. The application was successfully completed and introduced for use on Monday, November 14, 2004.

The first few months of this new session when Legal Services received its first real test were marked with a number of challenges and issues that were not unexpected. Any new system of this complexity that also must interact with both legacy and some new applications is almost certain to experience difficulties. Looking back, the primary “Keys to Success” for this project and the roll out included acknowledging the significant changes that will happen during the development and deployment of a new system, effective communication, and the support of the Project Sponsor.

The two major challenges faced by anyone seeking to develop a similar system are: (1) the technical challenges for the IT staff of identifying, configuring, and interfacing the applications needed to provide drafting, tracking, and database management, including the conversion of existing data, and (2) the need for a substantial commitment, over an extended period of time, for personnel at all levels (e.g., IT, executive sponsors, end users representing the full range of affected business functions) to ensure that the system is designed and deployed to meet the business needs of the end users.

The Legal Services Project Team management included:

- Diane Boyer-Vine: Project Sponsor
- Jeff Deland, Dan Weitzman, Jim Gilles, Tracy Fong and the LDC Executive Management Team: Project Oversight
- Jody Rosner, Elaine Filer and Ann Filios: Project Management
- Maria Pabon: Lead for Editor and External Interfaces
- Dale Rinde: Lead for Database and Project Architect
- Mendora Servin: Lead for Request Tracking, Reporting and Measure Management
- Sophie Wong: Lead for Publishing and Data Conversion
- Denise Yip: Lead for QA/QC

NALIT Seeks Bids from States Interested in Hosting the NALIT Seminar

By Scott Darnall

St. Paul	Baton Rouge
Sacramento	Richmond
Springfield, IL	Carson City
Harrisburg	Burlington, VT
Rapid City	

What do these cities have in common?

Each has been the host city for a NALIT Professional Development Seminar (PDS).

The site selection committee has a goal of setting the location for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 PDSs, hopefully by March. We need to get sites set as soon as possible to allow for a wider selection of hotels and possibly better rates. I know this is a busy time of year for everyone and it will be difficult to find time to fill out the Site Bid Form, but please make an effort to do so by **February 10th**.

Hosting the NALIT PDS can be a lot of work but also very rewarding. NCSL staff and the planning committee help with the planning, so do not worry about the time commitment. The main things are to get dates and hotels selected; the rest of the planning can wait until after session when you have more time.

The committee will review bids and recommend a site. The recommendation is then submitted to the entire NALIT Executive Committee for a vote. Criteria for site selection include:

- Does the host state have leadership approval?
- Does the host state have adequate staff to put the meeting together?
- Are the dates acceptable? (e.g., seminars are held in September or October; dates may require a Saturday night stay in order to assure lower airfares)

- Is the site close to the state capitol or other planned site visits?

- Is there an airport relatively close to the conference site, and is affordable (or free) transportation available to and from the airport?

- Are there hotels available that meet seminar facility requirements?

- Does the host city offer geographic variance from previous staff section events–moving around the country?

Does the host city have tourist appeal and offer social activities and area attractions?

If you are interested in hosting the NALIT Seminar, or if you would like more information about hosting, please contact one of the site selection committee members or Pam Greenberg. The site bid form is available on the NALIT website http://www.ncsl.org/legis/nalit/sitebid.htm

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Editor's Corner

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I had planned to have the newsletter published before the holidays, but you know what they say about the best-laid plans. Things have been very busy here in Louisiana. As most of you know, we had a special session in November to address the budget problems caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It was a very hectic seventeen days, and the legislature cut approximately $600 million from its executive budget. Many state agencies have furloughed and/or laid off employees. I believe this is a first in Louisiana state government. At present the Senate has frozen hiring and travel, and is looking at other areas that may be trimmed.

Another special session is planned for February, once the state has more information on its revenues, and to address a $3.7 billion bill owed to FEMA for expenditures it has made in Louisiana. Needless to say, Louisiana does not have $3.7 billion. Our regular session begins March 27, and ends June 19. It will be a very busy year.

I want to thank all those who submitted articles for the newsletter. If you submitted an article and it is not in this newsletter, it will appear in the next newsletter. As I explained when I solicited articles, my goal was to obtain enough articles for the two required newsletters. The first articles received were the ones chosen for this newsletter. It was simply a matter of first in, first published.

Thanks again to all those who contributed to making this newsletter possible. Your time and dedication are truly appreciated. Please contact the officers listed on the last page if you need more information about NALIT activities or services.

Gary K. Schaefer
Secretary, NALIT Executive Committee

2005-06 NALIT Committees

2006 NALIT Staff Achievement Awards Committee
Chair: Tim Rice, Illinois
The Legislative Staff Achievement Awards Committee solicits nominations and recommends award recipients for the 2006 NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Award, based on criteria outlined on the NALIT Web Site.

2006 Nominating Committee
Chair: TBA
The NALIT Nominating Committee interviews and evaluates interested candidates and presents the slate of candidates for election at the Business Meeting at the NCSL Annual Meeting at Nashville–August 15-19, 2006.

2006 Professional Development Seminar Planning Committee
Chair: Jim Greenwalt, Minnesota
The committee assists the host state staff as requested, plans session content and activities, locates speakers, and conducts other tasks that contribute to the success of the seminar.

2006 Professional Development Seminar Site Selection Committee
Chair: Scott Darnall, South Dakota
The committee reviews site selection criteria, solicits bids, and makes recommendations for locations of future Professional Development Seminars.

IT Technology Standards Committee
Chair: TBA
Committee activities include evaluating new and existing technologies and processes, and offering an unbiased opinion that NALIT and other NCSL staff sections can use as a source of information. The committee observes existing solutions, evaluates positive and negative aspects, and provides estimates of effort needed for implementation. The committee monitors other states' technology activities and utilize experts in those states to provide information to the NALIT membership. Members of this committee have a two-year appointment. The initial year will be spent forming the scope of the committee's work, and evaluating a few items for a report at the 2006 Annual Meeting. The committee membership consists of a mixture of management and technology specialists so that issues can be examined from all perspectives.

IT Survey Committee
Chair: Andy Harvey, Nevada
Members of this committee have a two-year appointment. Committee activities include evaluating the information currently in the survey and updating the types of information in the survey. The committee issues reminders to members to update their information within predetermined time frames (e.g., quarterly, annually), and decides the best means for presentation on the NALIT Web Site. The committee will also develop additional methods and activities to enhance the value of the survey information.

LINCS/NALIT Online Democracy Award Committee
Co-Chair: Mark Allred, Utah and Michael Adams, Colorado
The Online Democracy Award is sponsored by NCSL's Legislative Information and Communication Staff Section (LINCS) and NALIT. Each year the selection committee considers nominations from official legislative sites developed and maintained by or under the authority of (a) a state legislature, (b) a legislative house, or (c) an officially-recognized legislative partisan caucus.

Outreach Committee
Chair: Ann McLaughlin, Delaware
Members of this committee have a two-year appointment. Committee activities primarily include the continuation of outreach efforts to members of other staff sections and inactive NALIT members. Efforts are made to encourage inactive NALIT members to become involved again, and to reach newcomers.

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