

Title of Nomination: MT State Strategic Plan for Information Technology

Project/System Manager: Mary Bryson

Title: Policy & Planning Services Bureau Chief

Agency: Information Technology Services Division

Department: Administration

Address: PO Box 200113 -

City: Helena

State: MT

Zip: 59620-0113

Phone: 406-444-2700

Fax: 406-444-2701

Email: mbryson@state.mt.us

CATEGORY: State_IT_Management_Initiatives

Person Nominating (if different): Brian Wolf

Title: Chief Information Officer

Address: PO Box 200113

City: Helena

State: MT

Zip: 59620-0113

Phone: 406-444-2700

Fax: 406-444-2701

Email: bwolf@state.mt.us

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Montana State Strategic Plan for Information Technology

Executive Summary

In July 2001, the Montana Information Technology Act (SB 131) became effective. The Act created the position of Chief Information Officer for the state and established guiding principles for the implementation of information technology (IT) in state government. A critical component of the Act is the recognition by the Legislature and the Governor of the need for a single vision for information technology in state government. The Act provides for the development of a strategic plan for information technology in state government.

“We cannot underestimate the important role information technology plays in our daily lives. The delivery of services in business, education and government has been forever changed due to advances in technology and our willingness to embrace those advances. However, the value of technology can only be fully realized when it is implemented in a well-managed and effective way.

The appropriate technology implementation strategy for government requires that we focus on the services our customers need, and then deliver those services in the most effective and efficient manner. That is why I am pleased to present Montana’s first Strategic Plan for Information Technology. The plan presents the vision, goals and strategies for the State of Montana to move forward together with information technology through the remainder of this decade.” Governor Judy Martz

In September 2001, the State of Montana embarked upon its first statewide information technology strategic planning effort. Previous efforts for information technology planning had been undertaken, however, the state IT community had initiated these efforts. The State Strategic Plan for Information Technology for Montana state government is the first comprehensive plan that establishes a statewide vision for information technology and included the involvement and approval of state policy level personnel. The IT Vision follows a framework that establishes the priorities and building blocks for moving forward together toward effective implementation of IT in the future. The strategic plan identifies 9 goals and 36 strategies that support the themes identified in the planning process. The goals and objectives set the general direction for state government’s use of IT resources. In addition, the plan provides strategic initiatives, many of which cross agency and jurisdictional boundaries. Strategic initiatives are IT-related goals or projects already embraced by the state and pursued to enable state government to achieve its IT Vision. They provide the specific avenues for implementation of the IT goals.

Planning, as provided in Montana’s environment, is an ongoing process; it is not a one-time event. This project provided the basis for all future planning efforts to be completed in the State of Montana. The Strategic Plan for IT does not exist in a vacuum. It becomes the cornerstone of the state’s future investments in information technology.

Montana State Strategic Plan for Information Technology

A. Description of Project

During the last quarter century, Montana state government agencies deployed information technology to pursue their missions to provide various services to the citizens of the state. For the most part, the efforts of these agencies were independent of each other, sometimes resulting in a duplication of systems and hardware. The needs of citizens were not always considered when government made investments in information technology.

The 2001 State Legislature recognized information technology (IT) as an enabler of government services and a critical component in state government's ability to provide appropriate services to its citizens. However, the legislature also recognized the complex and often overwhelming nature of controlling the growth and cost of state government's IT investments.

In July 2001, the Montana Information Technology Act (SB 131) became effective. The Act created the position of Chief Information Officer for the state, who has responsibility for managing the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD). The Act also established guiding principles for the implementation of information technology in state government. A critical component of the Act is the recognition by the Legislature and the Governor of the need for a single vision for information technology in state government. The Act provides for the development of a strategic plan for information technology in state government.

The driving force behind the legislature's initiative was to enable state government to establish a well-managed information technology infrastructure, minimizing duplication and redundancy and taking advantage of public/private strategic relationships. Planning is an integral piece for establishing the foundation for well-managed deployment and use of information technology in state government.

The Montana Information Technology Act also requires that each state agency develop an information technology plan. Information from the individual agency plans, along with research and trend information, is used in the Strategic Plan for Information Technology. State agency plans and projects will be summarized in a companion document. The summaries provide specific agency technology goals and objectives information and outline the budget requirements for implementing the plans. The Act also requires the Department of Administration to review and approve the agency plans and provide oversight for the state's procurement of information technology.

In September 2001, the Information Technology Board (ITB) began the process of developing the information technology strategic plan. The *State of Montana Strategic Plan for Information Technology* provides the framework and guidance for state agencies to develop and use information technology resources to provide state government services. The timeline on the last page depicts the planning process associated with the project to create the first statewide strategic plan for information technology for Montana state government.

As documented on the timeline, the planning process encompassed several meetings of the ITB, as well as strategic planning sessions with other governance groups. In addition, the ITSD

provided Agency Plan Instructions and a Template, with corresponding training sessions for preparation of the individual Agency Information Technology Plans required by the Act.

In preparing the Montana state plan Vision for information technology, the senior management of ITSD and the members of the ITB responded to several key questions. The questions were designed to assist these managers in determining the strategic direction of information technology for state government. In forming the vision, the policy group centered its discussions on four building blocks: customer and citizen, services provided, technology and stewardship. These building blocks drive the description of where the state wants its information technology resources to be in the future.

The ITB and ITSD focused on determining whether state government should be customer-focused when developing and deploying technology to provide services. The results are depicted in the state's e-government initiatives, including a specific goal and strategic initiative focused on e-government. They also considered how to obtain input from the customers served by government, the level of services government provides, and the methods used to deliver those services. In addition, the ITB and ITSD evaluated what the appropriate level of technology might be in state government and how to meet customer expectations for service delivery methods. The ITB considered the impetus for the passage of SB 131 and agreed that state government must demonstrate accountability for its investment in technology to the Governor, the Legislature and the citizens of the state.

With these broad concepts in mind, the ITB and ITSD formed a vision for information technology. Throughout the vision, goals and strategies included in the state plan, common themes emerge and are identified by catch phrases throughout the document: Customer-Focus, Economic Empowerment, Strategic Relationships, Reliability, and Effective Management. These themes drive the direction of technology for the State of Montana in the future. The goals, strategies, and strategic initiatives are linked to these themes and demonstrate how the state intends to achieve its vision for information technology. The vision portrays a focus on the needs of the customers – citizens, businesses, other governments, and all stakeholders – in determining the direction of state government information technology.

The State Strategic Plan for Information Technology was issued April 1, 2002, with the Agency Plans for IT completed by June 30, 2002.

B. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government

The State Strategic Plan for Information Technology provides the State of Montana with the opportunity to demonstrate more effective management of its investments in technology.

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The appropriate technology implementation strategy for government requires that we focus on the services our customers need, and then deliver those services in the most effective and efficient manner. That is why I am pleased to present Montana's first Strategic Plan for Information Technology. The plan presents the vision, goals and strategies for the State of Montana to move forward together with information technology through the remainder of this decade.” Governor Judy Martz

The policies and guiding principles of the Montana Information Technology Act provide the framework for the use and deployment of information technology in Montana state government. The first policy: Information technology shall be used to improve the quality of life of Montana citizens by providing educational opportunities, creating quality jobs and a favorable business climate, improving government, and protecting individual privacy and the privacy of the information contained within information technology systems. This policy is emulated in the vision statement created by the State of Montana. The vision portrays a focus on the needs of the customers – citizens, businesses, other governments, and all stakeholders – in determining the direction of state government information technology.

The second policy in the Act states that the development of information technology resources in the state must be conducted in an organized, deliberative, and cost-effective manner. To that end, the Act requires the state to establish a statewide strategic plan for information technology. The planning process used to create this - the state's first complete statewide strategic plan for information technology has been long on input and short on time. As part of the process, we solicited advice from the newly formed, Information Technology Board (ITB), other state information technology governance groups, state agencies and local government officials. The foundational policies in Act provide the basis for much of this information gathering. These policies guided us in the development and solidification of our newly adopted vision. The goals and strategies defined in the state plan will guide how state agencies develop and use information technology resources in the future.

As ITSD completes its review and approval of the Agency IT Plans, we have already identified areas where the state can minimize duplication and redundancy through the sharing of resources and building upon the strategic directions contained in the state plan.

C. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state

As described by Governor Martz in the transmittal letter for the State Strategic Plan for IT:

“The vision, goals, and strategies outlined in this plan are broad and far-reaching. The challenges are significant. As challenging as the road will be, the possibilities are vast. We have the opportunity, through implementing best practices, to enhance the way citizens of Montana interact with their state government. We also have the momentum to develop statewide systems that empower those who are doing business in Montana and for Montana. Moving forward together, Montana will continue the process of providing government services through the use of well planned and managed information technology. I am confident we will continue to develop a more effective government that serves our citizens and businesses and expands the possibilities for our great state.” Governor Martz

The adoption and implementation of the goals, strategies and strategic initiatives contained in the State Strategic Plan for Information Technology will lead to improved and more cost effective services for the citizens of the state of Montana.

D. Return on investment, short-term/long-term payback

1. Strategic Plan. The successful completion and issuance of a State Strategic Plan for Information Technology provides several opportunities for improved return on investments and short-term/long-term payback. The plan provides strategic direction for the state's investments in technology and empowers state agencies to broaden their view when considering information technology solutions.
2. Agency IT Plans. The development of Agency IT Plans and review of those plans by the ITSD has documented additional opportunities for short-term wins, such as: the consolidation of distributed servers into a shared enterprise server environment; coordination and cooperation among agencies pursuing electronic media management; the use of similar technology solutions for video streaming, video conferencing, and GIS, etc.; and improved project management methodologies.
3. E-government. The state has entered into a private/public partnership for the deployment of e-government services. Several applications have been "web-enabled" through the partnership, including Business Entity Search, Professional and Occupational Licensing and Lookup, State Park Passports, Motor Vehicle Records, Income Tax Payments, and several more in development.
4. Contractual Terms and conditions. As a result of the planning sessions, the ITSD has established a legal task force to develop standard contract terms and conditions for use in all state IT contracts.
5. Disaster Recovery. The State Strategic Plan for IT contains goals and objectives related to disaster recovery and business continuity planning. ITSD responded by establishing a team to develop division-level disaster recovery plans to be followed by working with agencies in developing individual agency disaster recovery and business continuity plans. This effort will be coordinated with the Homeland Security Task Force and the "Continuity of Government" project, which is developing a comprehensive response plan for critical state functions.
6. Project Management Methodologies. ITSD has begun development of a state standard project management methodology that would be used by all agencies for projects of a certain size. This aligns with the State Strategic Plan for IT in two places: as a strategy in the Well-managed goal and associated with the Implementing Best Practices strategic initiative.
7. IT Training. Agency training requirements were identified in a number of areas in conjunction with the project to develop the State Strategic Plan for IT and the development of the related processes used to guide agencies in the development of individual agency IT plans. A number of training requirements have been tentatively identified, including project management, strategic planning procedures, business process reengineering.

8. Contractor Quality Assurance. ITSD recently adopted the Contractor Quality Assurance Program to enable proactive management of the state's IT outsourcing activities. This program sets out a process to assess and track the quality of IT products and services purchased by state agencies.
9. IT Policy and Standards Development Processes. ITSD recently proposed the use of standard processes for the development of enterprise policies and standards (including software and hardware). These processes provide a framework for proposing new and revised standards and policies for the information technology environment in state government. The IT Standards Development Process was adopted by the ITMC at its May 2002 meeting. The first enterprise IT standard adopted under the new process relates to Web development tools. The Policy Development Process was reviewed with the ITB at its May 2002 meeting, with the expectation it will be endorsed at the September 2002 meeting of the Board.

State of Montana IT Strategic Planning Timeline

