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## **2003 NASCIO Awards: Communications Infrastructure State of Hawaii Governor Communications Package**

In January of 2003, the State of Hawaii launched a communications application suite: the Governor's Communications Package, which consisted of 3 components. The first component is an email feedback form called "Hello Gov" that citizens can use to contact the Governor on any topic. In the first four months 600 feedback forms were sent to the Governor's office. The second component allows citizens to apply to serve on the 160 Boards and Commissions in Hawaii. Before this system was launched, applications had to be submitted in hard copy, but already this year 120 applications have been submitted electronically. The third component allows citizens and organizations to request the Governor's presence at various events. Over 250 requests have been received thus far in 2003.

These applications are important to the State of Hawaii because they open the channels of communication between the Governor and the citizens. "Hello Gov" allows the Governor to keep her finger on the pulse of public issues and concerns. She ensures that each citizen submitting a feedback form receives a speedy response to his or her concerns or comments. The application that allows citizens to apply to serve on Boards and Commissions in Hawaii helps to encourage citizen participation in state government and, because the system simplifies the application process, more citizens are willing to become involved. The final application, which allows citizens and organizations to request the Governor's presence at various events, provides the public with a voice directly into the Governor's office, making her personally aware of the events going on around the state. The Communications Package increases the ease of communication between the public and the Governor, and is a tool for managing workflow behind the scenes in the Governor's office.

No other system allows for such ease of communication between citizens and the highest-ranking official in the state. By encouraging online communication with the Governor, the State is bringing government back to the citizens, and creating a forum for all voices to be heard. The system fosters understanding and growth in both the citizens and government, and encourages cooperation. As these applications are utilized, everyone involved reaps the benefits: the State Agencies, the Government, the citizens, and the businesses of Hawaii. This unique application suite is an excellent example of bringing simplicity to citizen/government communications.

# **2003 NASCIO Awards: Communications Infrastructure State of Hawaii Governor Communications Package**

## **Description**

Launched in January of 2003, the Governor's Communications Package allows citizens to open a dialog directly with the Governor about issues pertinent to their lives. This application suite consists of 3 components, which allow citizens to communicate with the Governor about different topics.

The first application is called "Hello Gov" and consists of a feedback form that citizens can use to contact the Governor. Since launched, over 600 feedback forms have been emailed to the Governor, which are sent directly to her office for her review and reply. This application is important because it brings the citizens into direct dialog with the Governor, allowing her to keep her finger on the pulse of public issues and concerns. Submissions range from complaints from citizens about law violations in their communities, to requests for assistance from students outside of the state doing projects on Hawaii. The Governor ensures that each citizen that submits a feedback form receives a speedy response to his or her concerns or comments.

The second application allows citizens to apply to serve on the 160 Boards and Commissions in Hawaii. This application increases the accessibility of State Government to the citizens and encourages their active participation. By simplifying the application process, and allowing citizens to complete it from their home or office, it has become easier for all interested parties to participate. Over 120 applications have been received electronically already this year. The larger the audience that is reached by this application, the more accurately the Boards and Commissions will reflect the citizen's interests.

The third application allows citizens and organizations to request the Governor's presence at various events. Requests are submitted online, directly to the Governor's chief scheduler. When appropriate, they can be rerouted to other state departments for action. Over 250 requests have been received thus far in 2003. This provides the public with a voice directly into the Governor's office, making her personally aware of their fund-raising or awareness events, as well as important events for schools, non-profit organizations, businesses and the military communities. This application increases the ease of communication between citizens and organizations, and the Governor.

## **Significance**

The Governor's Communications Package eases the operation of government on a number of levels. The "Hello Gov" application allows citizens to connect with the Governor, reducing the number of phone calls and mail that the office receives daily. It also helps foster positive relations between the Governor and the citizens because they

are able to receive faster and more accurate responses to their concerns. The application that allows citizens to submit online applications to serve on Boards and Commissions allows the government to select from a larger group of interested citizens, ensuring that each board and commission best represents the population. The application also cuts down on paperwork as fewer hard copy applications are received. The application that allows citizens and organizations to request the Governor's presence at various events also cuts down on paperwork, and reduces the number of inquiries fielded by the office.

### **Benefits**

The benefits of this application package are immense, as no other system allows for such ease of communication between citizens and the highest-ranking official in the state. By encouraging online communication with the Governor, the State is bringing government back to the citizens, and creating a forum for all voices to be heard. This fosters understanding and growth in both the citizens and government, and encourages cooperation rather than discord. By creating easier and more convenient ways for citizens to participate in State Government, the actions of the Boards and Commissions across the state are able to best reflect the interests of the people. As these communications applications are used, the benefits are reaped by everyone involved, the State agencies, the Government, the Citizens, and the businesses of Hawaii.

### **Return on Investment**

The following chart illustrates Hawaii's Return on Investment for the Governor's Communication Package.

Hawaii ROI Checklist	Description
<b>Operational Efficiency</b>	
Reduce Overall Program Costs	
Redirect Manpower to Other Areas	Greatly reduced the manpower required to respond to inquiries from the public and improved the work flow process within the Governor's office.
Achieve Policy Objectives	Allowed the Governor to fulfill several policy objectives including creation of an open system for membership on boards and commissions, and seeking citizen input on policy matters.
Privatize a Govt. Responsibility	Developed and maintained at no cost by the private sector portal contractor
<b>Constituent Service</b>	
Add Constituent Value	Provides a streamlined and flexible communications channel between the citizens and the Executive Branch, adding to the perception of open government.
Lower Constituent Cost	
Greater Service Availability	Provides 24/7 electronic access to anyone wishing to communicate with the Governor's office.
Constituent-Centricity	This suite was developed for ease of use by non-technical members of the public.
Fewer Interactions with Staff	The public submits the request one time and it is routed to the appropriate individual for response. Eliminated the need for citizen to make multiple phone calls.
<b>Political Return</b>	
Greater Participation via Easier Access	Provides a streamlined and flexible communications channel between the citizens and the Executive Branch, adding to the perception of open government.
Area Economic Impact	Communicates "Aloha" to those considering a move or visit to Hawaii.
Greater Public Transparency	Improves trust in government by making it easy to send and receive information to the highest levels of state government.
Greater Accountability/Better Data	Provides an efficient tool for communicating directly to specific groups and individuals.
Improve Decisionmaking/ Policymaking	Provides real-time data from the public by which to measure the effect of government policy decisions.
This checklist was adapted from material in "Creating a Case for a Government IT Project", by J. Kost and A. Di Maio, January 6, 2003, Gartner, Inc.	

## Links

### Hello Gov

Live: <http://www.ehawaii.gov/gov/email/exe/mail.cgi>

### Request Governor's Participation

Live: Please use for observation only, do not submit.

<http://www.ehawaii.gov/appt/html/gov.html> (citizen uses)

Test: Please feel free to use this test site to explore the application.

<http://dev.ehawaii.gov/appt/html/gov.html> (citizen uses)

<http://dev.ehawaii.gov/appt/admin/admin.cgi> (gov's staff uses)

admin username: gov\_test1

admin password: test

### Boards and Commissions Application

Live: <http://www.ehawaii.gov/gov/jobs/exe/jobs.cgi>