

National Association of State Chief Information Officers

Nomination for 2003 Recognition Awards for Outstanding Achievement
in the Field of Information Technology

1. Nomination Form

Title of Nomination: **Internet Continued Claims System**

Project/System Manager: Ron Nooner

Title: IT Systems Integration Analyst, Sr.

Agency: Job Service Division

Department **Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL)**

Address: 317 Main Street

City/State/Zip: Boise, ID 83702

Phone: 208 332-3570 x3384

Fax: 208 334-6430

E-Mail: rnooner@jobservice.us

Category of Judging: Digital Government: Government to Citizen (G to C)

Person Nominating: Brett Richard

Title: Development Manager

Agency: Idaho Department of Labor

Address: 317 Main Street

City/State/Zip: Boise, ID 83702

Phone: 208 332-3570 ext. 3459

Fax: 208 334-6300

E-Mail: brichard@jobservice.us

2. Executive Summary

The Idaho Department of Labor prepares tens of thousands of checks for Unemployment Insurance claimants each week. To continuously receive benefits, every claimant has to contact our office every week and certify that they are eligible for another week of benefits by filing a continued claim.

For several years, most of these continued claims have been handled by our Tel-A-Claim VRU system, which accepts phone calls from claimants every week. The phone call to Boise is a long distance call for many claimants, incurring a toll charge for the claimant.

To alleviate long-distance charges and provide another convenient way for claimants to interact with our systems, we developed our Internet Continued Claims system in February 2002. This system was developed in about 2 weeks, by 2 full time developers. It currently accepts about 1500 continued claims per week. It operates 24 hours a day, every day. Most of our claims come on Sundays, and on a typical Sunday the new system will take 700 continued claims.

Internet Continued Claims has already been a great benefit to our customers. It provides a simple, intuitive way to file continued claims, and saves a great deal of long distance charges. Each week usage of the new system increases, and the benefits become more significant.

3. Written Justification (A through D)

a) Description of project, including length of time in operation:

The Internet Continued Claims System provides Idaho's unemployment insurance claimants the ability to certify their eligibility online in order to receive continued benefits. This system replaces a telephone VRU arrangement where many claimants were required to incur toll charges in order to call the Unemployment Office every week to certify their eligibility. To alleviate long-distance charges and provide another convenient way for claimants to interact with our systems, the Internet Continued Claims system was developed in February 2002.

This system was developed in about 2 weeks, by 2 full time developers. It currently accepts about 1500 continued claims per week. It operates 24 hours a day, every day. Most of our claims come on Sundays, and on a typical Sunday the new system will take 700 continued claims.

ICC is built using Active Server Pages, which run on Microsoft Internet Information Server. This allows most processing to occur on our centralized servers, enabling customers to use our application from any standard Internet browser. Most coding was done in VBScript, which allowed us to leverage our existing staff knowledge of Visual Basic. Data is maintained in a MS SQL Server database, providing great scalability and reliability. Each night, all continued claims that are filed over the Internet are uploaded to our mainframe system to be processed along with all other claims.

b) Significance to the improvement of the operation of government:

Internet Continued Claims not only provides benefits to our customers, it also enhances the efficiency of the implementation of the Unemployment Insurance program by the Department.

Our Tel-A-Claim system is several years old, and it doesn't scale as well as it once did. The Internet Continued Claims application has already absorbed some of the load that system previously handled, extending the life of the Tel-A-Claim system and helping prevent an emergency replacement.

The Idaho Department of Labor prepares tens of thousands of checks for Unemployment Insurance claimants each week. To continuously receive benefits, every claimant has to contact the IDOL office every week and certify that they are eligible for another week of benefits by filing a continued claim.

For several years, most of these continued claims have been handled by the Tel-A-Claim VRU system, which accepts phone calls from claimants every week. The phone call to Boise is a long distance call for many claimants, incurring a toll charge for the claimant.

c) Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state:

Internet Continued Claims has already been a great benefit to our customers. It provides a simple, intuitive way to file continued claims, and saves a great deal of long distance charges. Each week usage of the new system increases, and the benefits become more significant.

For our Unemployment Insurance claimants, receiving benefits in a timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner helps ensure the stability of their families and livelihoods.

Internet Initial Claims provides a simple to use, reliable, inexpensive way for customers to file their continued claims. Reaction to the new system has been positive. Unsolicited customer feedback includes the following:

- This is GREAT; to be able to forego a LD (long distance) phone bill is wonderful, especially when you are unemployed.
- This is very nice and much better than phone contact--thank you!
- This system rocks, you guys are awesome.
- This is GREAT!!! I love being able to do this electronically! No long distance calls and, if you have a library card, you can use the library computer to do it. Thank you for making this possible.
- I like the Internet claim system. It is quick, efficient and concise. Thank you.
- I think it is great being able to enter our claim online rather than calling long distance.

Customers appreciate the ease and convenience of the new system, and have begun using the new system in great numbers despite little or no advertising.

d) Return on investment, short-term/long-term payback

Benefits to Date

Approximate development costs are only \$5,820, as shown in the following calculations.

Resource	Hours	# of Staff	Total Hours	Cost/Hour with benefits	Total Cost
Programmers	80	2	160	\$32.00	\$5,120.00
Project Manager	20		20	\$35.00	\$700.00
					\$5,820.00

Previously, claimants had to call and use the Tele-Claim system. Many of these calls were long distance, and incurred significant toll charges. The **cost savings** to these claimants is estimated at over \$3,000 per year, returning our initial investment in about 2 years.

The program’s operational costs are minimal, with the primary ongoing expense being labor. Very little effort is required to keep the Continued Claims system working effectively. It is

estimated to take only 20 hours per year to change and support this application, costing just \$640 per year.

Resource	Hours	# of Staff	Total Hours	Cost/Hour with benefits	Total Cost
Programmers	20	1	20	\$32.00	\$640.00
Total					\$640.00

# Claims Filed as of 7/24/02	16,000
% that are long distance	46.50%
Ave Min per Call	4
Ave Cost per Min	\$0.10
Ave Cost per call	\$0.40
Total Cost Savings	\$2,976.00

Ongoing Benefit

Ongoing support costs for this system should total only \$2,800 per year. This estimate is based on a labor rate of \$35 (with overhead costs) and 80 hours of labor each year.

If we assume a conservative participation rate of 10%, there will be a cost savings realized for our customers of \$372 per week, or \$16,544 per year. While each customer only sees a small part of this cost savings, the fact that they save a small amount each week for many weeks in a row is significant. The computations below show estimates for long-term payback:

Average weekly claims	20000
Expected 10% ICC usage	0.1
Average Weekly ICC Calls	2000
% that are long distance	46.50%
Ave Cost per Call	\$0.40
Expected Average Weekly Cost Savings	\$372.00
Expected Annual Cost Savings	\$19,344.00
Maintenance Costs	2800
Net Benefit per year	\$16,544.00

This annual savings directly benefits our claimants, who need to save every dollar they can during a period of unemployment.