

Category: Digital Government: Government to Government
Nomination: West Virginia Employee Communication Network (WVECN)

West Virginia Employee Communications Network Digital Government: Government to Government

Nomination Form

May 23, 2003 extension to deadline granted.

Title of Nomination: West Virginia Employee Communications Network

Project/System Manager: Tom Susman
Job Title: Secretary of Administration (Acting)
Agency: **West Virginia Department of Administration**
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Category for judging: **Digital Government: Government to Government (G to G)**

Person Nominating: Charles E. Smith
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West Virginia Employee Communication Network

Executive Summary

Governor Bob Wise of West Virginia wanted a system whereby state employees could voice their opinions and make suggestions directly to him. Created specifically for this purpose, the West Virginia Employee Communication Network (WVECN) turned Governor Wise's vision into a reality.

Last December, responding to a \$250 million budget gap for FY 2004, Governor Wise utilized multi-media and Internet technology to ask state employees for their help. During a State Employee Town Hall meeting broadcast to 14 remote sites across West Virginia, Wise introduced the WVECN website which provides a forum for state workers to suggest cost-effective changes and other ideas to improve government efficiency.

"I have great confidence in the ability of public employees in our state to help make these changes. In my many years of service to the people of our great state, I have always been impressed by the conviction shown by our public servants," commented Governor Wise in launching the program.

At the time, State leaders had no idea what to expect but within 48 hours of the WVECN website's launch, more than 500 suggestions were received. The response continues to be overwhelming! To date, the forum has received approximately 1400 suggestions for ways to improve the efficiency and service of West Virginia's state government.

Project Description

WVECN, the West Virginia Employee Communication Network, is West Virginia's suggestion box for government employees: www.wv.gov.org/wvecn/

With WVECN, employees may call, e-mail, write, fax, or complete an online form to submit suggestions on improving operations or saving money. The system captures every suggestion in a data repository, then, the WVECN staff refers the suggestions via e-mail to an agency responder for feasibility, cost and benefit analysis.

The WVECN system also enables managers to easily produce standard reports, such as, feasibility studies and cost-benefits analysis by simple "clicks" within the web-based application.

Significance of Improvement

The WVECN is a comprehensive communication tool for all of state government, which allows employees' voices to be heard by top-level management. In the past, our state agencies used a "trickle down" approach to management. With WVECN, our top-level management has the ability to develop policy changes by taking valuable employee suggestions into consideration.

Since the WVECN can be accessed from the West Virginia homepage, citizens in the private sector also have the ability to contribute ideas. The end result benefits all perspectives: West Virginia government, its employees and, most importantly, our citizens.

Because the system was designed to accept all forms of communication, it meets the needs of all employees giving them numerous avenues to submit their suggestions. The system offers anonymity to whistleblowers who wish to remain unknown.

The WVECN enables managers to easily produce standard reports, such as, feasibility studies and cost-benefit analysis by simple clicks within the web-based application.

During a time of decreased state operating funds, the system was also designed to efficiently transmit the suggestions to the feasibility teams via e-mail. The feasibility teams supply answers directly into the systems.

Benefits Realized by Taxpayers, Agencies and the State

This year, the state of West Virginia will save \$2.3 million by the elimination of 555 vehicles from the state's fleet. Through WVECN, numerous employees submitted suggestions concerning fleet inventories and management. In response to those suggestions, Governor Wise issued an executive order to trim fleet inventories.

Other WVECN suggestions have the potential to save between \$200,000 and one million dollars each. The state will continue to streamline operations and implement cost-saving changes to provide a more efficient state government for West Virginia citizens and businesses.

Return on Investment

The State of West Virginia has estimated the cost of creating and maintaining the WVECN system at approximately \$70,000 per year in existing staff salaries. No additional equipment or services were purchased for WVECN.

As evidenced by the \$2.3 million saved by trimming the state's vehicle fleet, the return on investment is almost immediate. Additional returns are expected, as suggestions are submitted through WVECN, evaluated by state agencies, approved by the Governor and implemented.

The best return on investment is the "voice" it has given to state employees. With just a few keystrokes, employees can make a difference in state government, improving services to its citizens, saving money and alerting top-level officials when a change in its daily operations is needed.

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Nomination Form

Please complete entire form. All nominations must be postmarked no later than May 23, 2003. Extension to deadline granted.

Title of Nomination: _____

Project/System Manager: _____

Job Title: _____

Agency: _____

Department: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

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Fax: _____

Email: _____

Category for judging (please list only one): _____

Person Nominating (if different than above): _____

Job Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please return nominations to:

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