

e-Government and ERP

Issue

Technology has been proved to be an enabler of productivity and operational improvements within businesses and throughout entire industries. With the proper strategies and investments, these same benefits could be realized by governments at all levels in West Virginia, particularly at the state level. West Virginia needs to accelerate its efforts and make continued investments in improving technology services and creating innovative solutions for government and its citizens.

Background

The state of West Virginia spends more than \$300 million annually on technology and systems. Until recently, much of this spending was done in a non-strategic, fragmented manner. Recognizing that a change needed to be made, Governor Manchin pushed through a number of key reforms to improve technology within state government and to enhance the reliability and security of state data. The Governor, a recognized advocate for using technology to improve state government, has put in place a strong Chief Information Officer (CIO) in his administration and is pushing to re-engineer and modernize the state's information technology architecture and systems.

One area where West Virginia's government could benefit is in the area of e-Government. The benefits of e-government have been identified for many years now, including this 2001 statement in the West Virginia State Government Information Technology Plan, 2001-2005:

“The growing interest in e-government affords West Virginia an opportunity to fundamentally rethink traditional state agency services and to refashion some of them to dramatically improve state government's value. The design of the new application should lend itself to the coordination and interoperability of services between and among agencies.”

E-Government, also called digital government, involves greater use of established and leading-edge information technology systems and applications to open government and government information to the public and to enable government agencies to process and share information for public benefit, to enable online transactions and to enhance democracy. Another important component of e-government is to enhance and improve the productivity of government services via technology and web applications.

While e-government is often thought of as “online government” or “Internet-based government” — many non-Internet based “electronic government” technologies also can be used or incorporated as part of enhancing government's operations, functions and openness. These may include telephone, fax, PDA, VoIP, MMS, and 3G, GPRS, WiFi, WiMAX and Bluetooth. Other technologies can include CCTV, tracking systems, RFID, biometric identification, road traffic management, GPS, and regulatory enforcement, identity cards,

smart cards and other NFC applications; polling station technology (where non-online e-voting is being considered), TV and radio-based delivery of government services, email, online community facilities, newsgroups and electronic mailing lists, online chat, and instant messaging technologies.

The Chamber's Position

The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce supports the modernization of West Virginia's technological infrastructure and enhancing services and customer support through added e-government systems and web-based services. The Chamber also urges the Legislature to provide necessary funding to enable the Governor's Office of Technology to further implement its strategic plan regarding information technology (IT) consolidation and improvement among state agencies and systems. The Chamber supports the recent appropriation of state funds for the comprehensive ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) project being undertaken by the WVGOT. A successful consolidation of state technology systems and applications would help not only to remove redundancy and reduce costs, but also enable better sharing and use of valuable information across a government enterprise. Mainframe consolidation, server virtualization and enterprise architecture all help to improve operations and increase productivity, while building better integrated access to databases and increasing the utility of computing systems and networks.