Office of Legislative Information Technology (OLIT) Project Status Update 2015 Biennium

1. Completed Major Projects:

a. Blade Center/SAN/Virtual Server Replacement – Mike Allen
This project replaced aging, unsupported server and storage hardware and the virtual server platform software as part of our regular life-cycle replacement strategy. This effort improved the Branch's computing, storage, and system availability, and reduced our server hardware footprint, and power and cooling requirements.

b. Network Health Assessment – Mike Allen
This is a natural follow-up project to a major redesign of the network from Novell eDir to Microsoft Active directory. It involved an independent review of the current network structure to ensure security, stability, and resiliency. It also provided a documented design of the Branch's network environment, which will enable the OLIT to create change and configuration management processes and will improve our ability to troubleshoot and optimize network operations. This also provided us with a solid foundation to make technology changes to meet future business needs.

c. Web Conferencing – Steve Eller
This project was done to provide web conferencing capabilities to the Legislative Branch employees while working at remote locations. This project allowed Legislative staff the ability to connect back via video links to coworkers to conduct face-to-face communication and computer-to-computer sharing.

d. Conversion of Old Audio and Video (AV) – Steve Eller
This project converted and consolidated all older audio and video into modern storage formats, and then consolidated and archived them into one repository. From 2001 to 2012 the Branch streamed and stored AV in Real format. Unfortunately, Real was no longer meeting Branch needs so an RFP was issued in 2011. A company named Granicus was awarded the contract for AV distribution and archiving. They use modern MP3 and MP4 file formats. This project converted all old (Real format) AV files to the new format, and also consolidated and archived all of the Branch's AV files (back to 2005) in one archive.

e. Move OPI Web Server Documents to Legislative Web Server – Steve Eller
Since the 1990s the Legislative Branch has leased web server space and service from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). In 2010 the Branch deployed our own web servers making the need for the OPI services unnecessary. In 2013 the lease with OPI ended, and all of the web documents and services hosted at OPI have been moved to Legislative Branch owned web servers.

f. Legislator E-mail Pilot – Darrin McLean

This was a pilot project to determine the feasibility and our capability to support a common e-mail address for legislators to conduct legislative business. Currently legislators use their own personal e-mail account, which has caused issues such as the mixing of personal and official information, lack of archiving, and difficulty to support. This solution would enable archiving of official e-mails and better control and support of the official business e-mail accounts.

2. Current Major Projects

a. Session Systems Replacement – Steve Eller

This is a major enterprise-level business system replacement project to upgrade multiple aging systems, including process design, MCA/ annotations, LAWS database, editor system, HB2 automation, Engrossing and Enrolling, and the MCA online system, all used to support the legislative session and related post session publication processes. Some of the systems involved in this effort are 15 – 20 years old and in danger of becoming obsolete, with potential significant consequences. If these systems do become obsolete, there is a good chance that the LAWS system will have unsupported software packages and could potentially become unusable.

In addition to the avoidance of system stability risk, the project is expected to produce the following benefits:
Automation of manual processes resulting in improved service and gains in efficiency;
Improvements in usability and comprehension of the proposed bills and amendments;
Developed skill sets to support new toolset; and
consolidation of system resources resulting in lower costs of operation and maintenance.

b. Legislative Fiscal Division Analysis Tools Upgrade – Steve Eller

The Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD) has been using user-developed desktop tools for much of their fiscal analysis and reporting. These toolsets are using aged technology, and one of the primary developers retired in 2012. That and the fact that the executive Branch is replacing their budget development system precipitated the need to enhance or replace LFD tools. These include: a) Fiscal Note system replacement. b) SABHRS data extracts re-work. c) MBARS and IBARS implementation and integration. d) General Status Sheet enhancements.

c. Upgrade Vote Systems Hardware – Mike Allen

This project will replace aging, unsupported hardware in support of the House and Senate Vote Systems. It is part of our equipment life-cycle replacement strategy.

3. Future Major Projects

a. Conversion of Programming Language – Steve Eller
This multi-biennium effort will convert the Branch's core databases and programming language to a modern technology. The legacy applications throughout the Branch were built and maintained in a desktop level toolset which were fine in their time, but presents a number of stability and security risks now. Furthermore, the legacy applications are not conducive to web-enabled applications – especially mobile application support. The switch to a modern programming toolset will support the Branch's move to more web-based and mobile device friendly, delivery of information. A big part of this project is training staff in the new development language and environment which will enable our internal staff to support the systems into the future.

b. Integrate Calendars and Noticing – Steve Eller
This is a carryover project from 2012-2013 that was not executed due to prioritization of other unplanned efforts. Over time the Legislative Branch has developed many (more than 10) electronic calendars to meet various business needs. There was little consideration of existing calendars when new calendars were developed. As a result, none of the calendars work together, and this means multiple updates are needed for one event change. Often one or more of the calendars has incorrect information, leading to miscommunication and lost time. This effort will improve efficiency and accuracy of calendar information throughout the Branch.

c. Firewall Replacement – Mike Allen
The current technology being used for the firewall between the Branch and the State network will no longer be supported by the vendor as of 2013. The Branch needs to replace this technology in order to maintain effective security controls over the Branch's network.

d. Data Backup – Darrin McLean
A business case analysis has been initiated to determine if our current data backup solution fits our network infrastructure since our redesign to Microsoft Active Directory and VMWare virtual server solution. The current backup process has limited capability with the new environment.

e. Remote Connection – Darrin McLean
A business case analysis has been initiated to evaluate the need for a new remote connection solution. OLIT expends numerous hours maintaining and upgrading the current environment. The Branch needs to research and evaluate a replacement technology solution that is easier to maintain and aligns more appropriately with the business need.

f. Disaster Recovery – Darrin McLean
This business case analysis will validate our current disaster recovery solution and target key IT components, which need to be recovered to ensure core business systems and applications are available during outages.

g. Enterprise Archiving Strategy – Darrin McLean
This business case analysis will establish an enterprise archiving strategy and begin its implementation. As the Legislative Branch continues to preserve and store historical data in electronic format, there is a need to have the capacity to store this data for various lengths of time up to indefinitely in accordance with business needs and legislative mandates.

h. Enterprise Architecture Phase II – Darrin McLean
During the 2012-2013 biennium the Legislative Branch instituted an enterprise architecture Program (LEAP). Phase II of this process improvement project will enable the Legislative Branch to maintain and mature the Legislative Enterprise Architecture Program. This will further the integration of business and IT and continue to improve the maturity of the Branch's governance over its IT investments.

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