NCSL

NALIT Newsletter

National Association of Legislative Information Technology   **SUMMER 2017**

Chair's Corner

Linda Wettstone, NALIT Chair, Senior Systems Analyst, Senate, Virginia

My oldest child, a daughter, is graduating from high school next week. She's a little sad and at the same time excited and happy for her future. I understand her feelings as I sit here in my office in front of my computer, putting together my thoughts for this writing and realizing that my year as chair is wrapping up. Thank you to all who have provided input and great advice. My thanks especially to Pam Greenberg, the Executive Committee and the Professional Development Seminar planning committee. Pam is an outstanding leader and extremely talented. I appreciate all of you taking the time out of your busy schedule for conference calls and just knowing that when I need your help I can just pick up the phone and you are willing and able to assist me. Everyone I have worked with is professional, dependable and friendly.

In looking ahead, I am very excited to attend our upcoming Summit and PDS. The executive committee is working on plans for the Legislative Summit to be held in Boston, Aug 6-9. The agenda includes topics of cybersecurity, captioning of webcasts, bill drafting systems, and more. Our annual NALIT Business Meeting will also be held during the Summit.

The PDS will be held Sept. 12-15 in Annapolis, Md. Thank you Maryland for hosting as the PDS planning committee is working on technical, policy, and management sessions. The PDS also offers the opportunity to share and compare your work experiences in roundtable and small group discussions. The online registration is available. I hope to see you in Boston and/or Annapolis!

I hope all of you remain optimistic about NALIT and all that it has to offer you! If you have not done so, please take the time to follow us on Facebook (@NALIT1), Twitter (@NALIT) and subscribe to the Listserv to stay in touch with NALIT news and upcoming events.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as chair this year and I share the same thoughts as my daughter because she is **more** excited and happy for her future—as I am for the future of NALIT.

NCSL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT
August 6-9, 2017
BOSTON

NALIT at the Legislative Summit

NALIT will be sponsoring several sessions at NCSL's 2017 Legislative Summit in Boston, and four of the sessions will be live-streamed and recorded for those who are unable to attend in person. The sessions include:

Captioning Legislative Webcasts *(Live streamed.)*
Increasingly, states are providing captions for the deaf and hearing impaired as part of their live webcasts of legislative proceedings. Learn about the issues concerning accessibility and captioning, including live stream captioning, necessary software, support on mobile devices and browsers and potential impact on remote testimony.

Expecting the Unexpected *(Live streamed.)*
Legislatures often face the unexpected—a sudden special session, protesters appearing at the capitol, a natural disaster, or cybersecurity or security threats. Legislative staff are on the front line when the unexpected happens. Hear from legislative colleagues in various roles about how they prepared for, dealt with or found solutions for unexpected situations.

Policies for Legislative Technologies *(Live streamed.)*
Social media, personal and state-owned devices, email and text messages—all raise questions about whether and how legislators and legislative staff use them, how the records they create are retained (or not) and what records are subject to public records requests. Hear how legislative policies were developed, what legislatures considered and how they came to

their conclusions, and discuss your own challenges with developing and implementing policies.

Cybersecurity Preparedness and Response *(Live streamed.)*
Having an incident response plan in place before a cyberattack occurs requires more than just a set of written instructions. It goes beyond IT staff and requires raising awareness, training and walking through potential scenarios with key personnel. Learn what makes a good incident response plan and discover how legislatures are implementing them.

NALIT Executive Committee Meeting
Discuss association services, meetings and outreach efforts. All NALIT members (legislative information technology professionals) are welcome to attend.

Bill Drafting Systems: A Collaborative Effort
Several states have upgraded their electronic bill drafting systems and many others are considering changes. Discuss the key factors that are critical to designing a system that works for drafters and editors; impediments to avoid; and implementation strategies utilized by IT professionals to develop these new systems.

NALIT BUSINESS MEETING AND DINNER

Daily Catch Seaport, Aug. 5, 6:30 p.m.
For the first time this year, NALIT will hold its annual Business Meeting in conjunction with our Dutch treat dinner. The business meeting and dinner will be at a popular local restaurant.

During the business meeting, NALIT members will elect new officers and recognize the winners of the NALIT Legislative Staff Achievement Awards. Spend the rest of the evening networking with your legislative IT colleagues from around the country.

For more information and to RSVP, contact Pam Greenberg, NCSL Liaison to NALIT, at pam.greenberg@ncsl.org or 303-856-1413 if you plan to attend. Guests are welcome, but space is limited, so please respond by **July 22, 2017**.

Professional Development Seminar

Annapolis, Md., Sept. 12-15, 2017

Join us at the NALIT Professional Development Seminar (PDS) in Annapolis. Combine opportunities to stay up-to-date on the latest developments in legislative information technology while visiting the oldest state capitol still in continuous legislative use.

The NALIT PDS will include educational sessions, a showcase of legislative applications from legislatures, vendor exhibits, and many opportunities to learn from and network with your colleagues in other states. Interacting with and learning from others can be the most valuable part of the PDS. At this year's "unconference" sessions, attendees will determine the topics and ideas to be discussed.

The Historic Inns of Annapolis, our conference hotel, is a very short walk to the State House, where you'll take part in tours and briefings about technology at the General Assembly. The hotel—made up of three historic buildings—is within walking distance of many attractions, including the historic waterfront cobblestone streets, waterfront restaurants and pubs, boutique shops and more.

The seminar sessions will cover:
- Security
- Committee applications
- Mobile device management
- BYOD issues
- Managing and prioritizing IT projects
- Web development
- Client support
- Windows 10
- And other topics you'll decide onsite!

Register for the seminar now and be sure to make your hotel reservations early. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Historic Inns of Annapolis, and will be available until **Aug. 21 or until all rooms in the room block are sold** (whichever comes first). The NCSL negotiated rate is $139 per night. Free in room Wi-Fi is included when you book your room through the NCSL block.

Annapolis is located along the Chesapeake Bay and has many nearby attractions to explore. The walkable downtown area boasts historic attractions and museums, restaurants, shopping and nightlife. Explore the area and plan your trip!

Professional Development Seminar Planning Committee
The committee plans session content and activities, identifies speakers, and conducts other tasks that contribute to the success of the Professional Development Seminar.
NALIT Chair:
- Linda Wettstone, Senate, Virginia

Host State Co-Chairs:
- Mike Gaudiello, Maryland
- Steve Dustin, Maryland

Members:
- Jim Bell, Senate, New York
- Kevin Foley, Texas
- Jeff Ford, Indiana
- Kyle Forster, North Dakota
- Glenn Harris, Idaho
- Cindy O'Dell, Kentucky
- Mendora Servin, California
- Kelly Stallings, North Carolina
- Ronda Tentarelli, Washington

un·con·fer·ence
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noun
a loosely structured conference emphasizing the informal exchange of information and ideas between participants, rather than following a conventionally structured program of events.

"at this unconference, attendees created sessions on the spot, making for an energizing and freewheeling exchange"

Legislative IT Profiles

In the Winter 2016 edition of the NALIT Newsletter, we began a series of articles profiling legislative IT offices. So far, we have published profiles of Alaska, Colorado, the Hawaii House, Hawaii Senate, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia. This edition includes profiles for Illinois and the Minnesota Revisor's Office.

Illinois Legislative Information System

By Mark Wenda, Executive Director

The Illinois General Assembly body, which is composed of 118 Representatives in the House and 59 Senators in the Senate, meets during a two-year biennial that is divided into two annual regular sessions and two annual veto sessions.
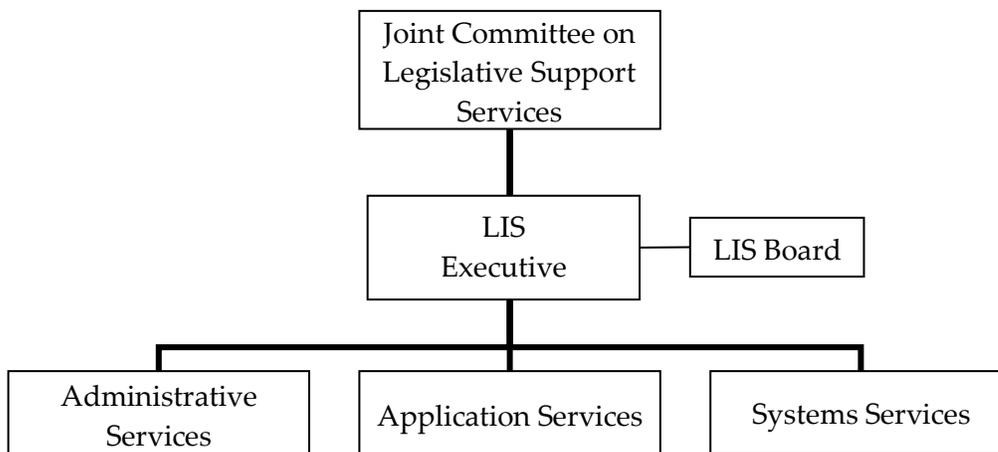
Annually, the Illinois General Assembly convenes for regular session on the second Wednesday of January through the end of May. Veto session convenes for two weeks between mid-November and the beginning of December to consider the governor's recommendations or vetoed legislation. When convened, neither chamber without the consent of the other shall adjourn for more than three days.

The governor may convene the General Assembly or the Senate alone in special session by a issuing a proclamation. Special sessions may also be convened by joint proclamation of the presiding officers of both houses. Only business

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encompassed by the proclamation together with any impeachments or confirmation of appointments can be conducted.

Either chamber may schedule perfunctory session days during which the clerk/secretary may read any legislative measure or may receive and read committee reports into the record. No further action may be taken with respect to a legislative measure during a perfunctory session day. Attendance by members is not required or recorded during perfunctory sessions.

In 1984, the Legislative Commission Reorganization Act designated the Legislative Information System (LIS) as a commission directly responsible to the Joint Committee on Legislative Support Services, which is composed of the president and minority leader of the Senate and the speaker and minority leader of the House. As of 2014, the LIS board consists of the clerk and assistant clerk of the House of Representatives and the secretary and assistant secretary of the Senate.

LIS is a nonpartisan agency currently with a staff of 28. LIS is organized into three distinct service areas:

Administrative Services (five staff) is responsible for the fiscal and personnel operations of the agency. This section also works closely with other fiscal and personnel operations in the legislative branch and other agencies to coordinate accounting systems and reporting. Administrative Services is also responsible for the receipts and disbursements of the General Assembly Computer Equipment Revolving Fund.

Application Services (15 staff) is responsible for the development, maintenance and support of over 70 main applications used by the General Assembly including the ILGA website. This includes analyzing needs and requests, proposing solutions, programming, testing and providing training. LIS develops all applications in-house.

Systems Services (eight staff) installs, maintains, and supports the infrastructure (operating systems, back-end software, networks, and all hardware) that supports other functions of the agency. This includes monitoring performance and providing security.

LIS serves the Illinois General Assembly, the office of the Secretary of the Senate, the office of the Clerk of the House and eight legislative support services agencies for a total of about 600 users located in Springfield and Chicago.

> LIS IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON UPGRADING VB6 APPLICATIONS TO .NET, WRITING A WORK FLOW TRACKING APPLICATION, REWRITING THE ILGA WEBSITE, IMPLEMENTING A NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE, CONSOLIDATING OUR NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADDING AND IMPLEMETING HYPERV HOST UPGRADES.

The major focus of LIS is on operating and maintaining the existing applications/networks while implementing enhancements and upgrades. All applications/networks are constantly evaluated for effectiveness and performance. Communication is maintained with users to ensure that all needed and desired service is being provided. Change requests are acknowledged, investigated, and evaluated. If accepted, resources are scheduled leading to development and implementation of the request. Hardware and software are constantly monitored and evaluated as well. If changes or upgrades are needed, they are implemented according to available resources and in conjunction with ongoing operations.

All implementations are prioritized and scheduled around legislative session to ensure the least likelihood of negative impact. Priorities and schedules are constantly in a state of flux and continually updated due to the sporadic schedule and changing needs of the General Assembly.

LIS is currently working on upgrading VB6 applications to .NET, writing a work flow tracking application for the Legislative Research Unit, rewriting the ILGA website, upgrading the chamber voting system hardware, implementing a network infrastructure upgrade between Chicago and Springfield, consolidating our network infrastructure, and adding and implementing HyperV host upgrades.

For more information on the Illinois General Assembly and LIS visit www.ilga.gov.

Minnesota Office of the Revisor

By Tim Orr, Deputy Revisor for Information Services

Minnesota became the nation's 32nd state in 1858. It has an area of 86,938.87 square miles (12th largest state). Minnesota is divided into 67 legislative districts. Each district is divided into two sections. Voters elect one senator from each district and one representative from each section. The legislature is comprised of 67 senators and 134 representatives for a total of 201 members.

Minnesota Statute section 3.011 defines the start date of each two-year biennium as "the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January of each odd-numbered year." The Minnesota Constitution specifies the end date of each year's session as the first Monday following the third Saturday in May of any year. It also limits the legislature to 120 legislative days during each biennium.

A special session of the Legislature may be called by the governor on extraordinary occasions. The governor does not have the power to limit the length of a special session.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes (or Revisor's Office) is nonpartisan. It is one of three joint offices providing services to both the House and Senate. Since its founding in 1939, the office has served as the compiler of Minnesota Statutes and is the official publisher of Minnesota Statutes, Laws, and Rules. In addition to serving members and legislative staff, the office provides a broad range of services to constitutional officers, and the executive and judicial branches of state government.

The Revisor's Office employs 65 full-time employees. The Information Services (IS)-unit consists of 15 full-time employees. The IS staff maintain: a) a datacenter; b) network hardware; c) servers; d) database; e) commercial software; f) custom written software; g) users' desktop hardware; and h) a help desk.

> WE ARE EVALUATING THE BENEFITS AND FEASIBILITY OF CONVERTING OUR INTRANET AND PUBLIC WEB PAGES. OUR WEB SITE IS CURRENTLY CODED USING PHP AND SQL. THE TECHNOLOGIES UNDER CONSIDERATION ARE DJANGO/PYTHON AND ELASTICSEARCH.

Revisor resources are available to members and staff of the House and Senate. As a nonpartisan office, we primarily support nonpartisan offices in the Legislature. Our four most frequently used IT systems within the legislature are:

- The VOIP telephone system (we manage the network hardware and software).

- An XML based legislative document publishing system. The system entered service in 2006. It is used by nonpartisan staff in both bodies to create, edit, and transmit 25 different legislative documents.

- A bill status system. The system is used by House and Senate Index staff to record floor actions on bills.

- A public website for accessing the text of bills and bill status. Our website also contains search tools for finding and viewing Minnesota Statutes, Laws, and Administrative Rules.

We have three major projects in progress or about to start. The first is a project that will start in the summer of 2017. The Revisor's Office will convene a working group consisting of state offices involved with the creation of Administrative Rules. The working group will identify the functional and nonfunctional requirements of the Minnesota Administrative Rules Status System. MARSS is a concept for a new software application. The goal is to improve public access, security, preservation, and transparency of state agencies' official rulemaking records through the creation of a single online records system. All state offices will upload their rulemaking record documents to this single system.

The second project is currently in an evaluation phase. We are evaluating the benefits and feasibility of converting our intranet and public web pages. Our web site is currently coded using PHP and SQL. The technologies under consideration are Django/Python and Elasticsearch.

The third project will be two years old when completed in December 2017. We have written new stylesheets for our XML based legislative document publishing system. From 2006-2015 this publishing system used FOSI stylesheets to assign page and line numbers in bills, and to create PDFs. The two-year project replaced the FOSI stylesheets with XSL-FO stylesheets running on the RenderX XEP server. These new stylesheets were used in the 2017 legislative session and have published every document type supported by our XML publishing system. The Revisor's Office website is at www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us.

Contribute Your State's Profile

Please consider contributing information about your office for the next edition of the newsletter. Send a profile of your office to the NALIT Secretary, c/o Pam Greenberg at pam.greenberg@ncsl.org. Here is some of the information you can include in your state's IT profile narrative:

- Normal legislative assembly schedule.
- Convene and adjournment schedule.
- Constitutional limitations on legislative days.
- Number of members and staff supported by IT.
- Number of legislative members by chamber.
- Number of full and/or part time legislative assembly staff, including types of staff.
- Any offsite locations supported.
- IT staff that support specific chambers or caucuses, and what types of support provided by the chamber IT staff support versus central IT staff.
- Areas of IT supported, and number of staff support for each area.
- Information about support for "bring your own devices" or equipment provided to members and staff.
- Organizational chart and governance of IT agency.
- Major IT projects in progress or completed
- Website link to your IT office or legislative website.

Navigating the NALIT Website

The NALIT website at www.ncsl.org/nalit is updated with current news items about NALIT or NCSL activities. It's also a place to find past articles and surveys about legislative IT projects. Use the full text search box on the NALIT website to search for legislative IT topics, or refine your search to see past newsletters, meeting minutes, or information about NALIT awards.