NCSL
NALIT Newsletter

Chair's Corner

Kyle W. Forster, NALIT Chair, Information Technology Manager, North Dakota Legislative Council

I have always been impressed with NALIT as an organization and it is an honor to serve as your Chair for this year.

During my career as an IT professional, I have attended numerous IT conferences, user group meetings, and seminars. By far, NALIT has been the most valuable. NALIT provides an excellent opportunity for members to network with other legislative IT staff and learn from their IT projects, implemented technologies, and business processes used in their legislatures. NALIT also provides many opportunities for staff to become involved, by sharing your knowledge and experience, by giving a presentation, participating in a panel discussion, or being a session moderator at the Summit or PDS, becoming a member of a committee, submitting a newsletter article, or responding to a listserv question.

We had an excellent Professional Development Seminar (PDS) in Annapolis last fall. Thanks again to Mike Gaudiello, Steve Dustin and the rest of Maryland staff for a great job hosting us!

Event preparations for this year are underway. The executive committee has identified NALIT session topics for the NCSL Legislative Summit in Los Angeles from July 30 to Aug. 2, 2018. The planning for the 2018 PDS is in progress. I am pleased to announce the Professional Development Seminar will be in Nashville on Sept. 11-14, 2018. The planning committee has begun developing the program. If you have a session topic to present, please let me know.

As your chair, I will be working hard to ensure we have another great year. I encourage all legislative IT staff from all states to get involved and participate in NALIT. I am confident you will also find your experience with NALIT to be valuable. If you would like more information about participating in NALIT, please contact me (kwforster@nd.gov, 701-328-4261) or Pam Greenberg (pam.greenberg@ncsl.org, 303-856-1413).

Mark Your Calendar!

NALIT at the NCSL Legislative Summit

The NCSL Legislative Summit will be held July 30-Aug. 2 in Los Angeles. NALIT sessions will cover cybersecurity, IT budgeting and more. www/ncsl.org/nalit.

NALIT Professional Development Seminar

The NALIT Professional Development Seminar will be held Sept. 11-14 in Nashville, Tenn. Visit www/ncsl.org/nalit18 for more details.

Legislative IT Profiles

In the Winter 2016 edition of the NALIT Newsletter, we began a series of articles profiling legislative IT offices. Since then, we've highlighted IT offices in 16 states: Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota Office of the Revisor, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee and Virginia. This edition highlights Indiana and Maine. Send in your state's profile now!

Indiana

By Geoff DePriest, Director, Office of Technology Services, Legislative Services Agency, Indiana

The Indiana General Assembly (IGA) was created in 1816, the same year Indiana became a state. Our House of Representatives consists of 100 members who serve two-year terms, while the Senate has 50 members serving four-year terms. As a citizen legislature, the IGA holds session between January and March in even numbered years, and between January and April in odd number years when the body is required to adopt a state budget.

Indiana's Legislative Services Agency (LSA) provides objective, non-partisan support for the IGA as a body, working with members and staff from all four caucuses. As one of four departments within LSA, the Office of Technology Services (OTS) provides a wide variety of services for approximately 600 users.

Within OTS, we organize our team members into three divisions.

- Infrastructure, with seven staff, manages our dedicated data center, internal and external connectivity, and desktop support.

- Development, with nine staff, uses open source software to create and support all of our custom web applications.

- Business Services, with nine staff, gathers user requirements, tests new features, and supports the day-to-day business processes for our users.

In addition, we have a chief technology officer who coordinates all of our technical planning and execution, as well as a director and deputy director who handle the administration, team development and strategic planning for the department.

While the Assembly is in session, our team is focused on monitoring the systems and applications, ensuring data and documents are being generated and posted correctly and quickly, and working with the legislative staff to address process issues as they arise. In addition to the devices provided by the House, Senate and LSA, we also support a range of BYOD phones, tablets, and laptops for members and staff for general functions like connecting to email and viewing the IGA website.

Most of our large development projects take place in the interim, and for the past few years, the priority was integrating a suite of web applications into a common platform referred to as INscribe. This tied together functionality for managing committees, conducting session in each chamber, taking votes on the floor and in committees and other administrative tools for caucus and LSA staff. These applications then feed the IGA website, which serves as the public front-end for INscribe, allowing citizens to see what actions have been taken on individual bills, watch live or archived videos, or view the Indiana Code in its current or historical versions. Internal users of the website (legislators and their staff) are also able to view draft documents and follow bills and committees of interest in ways that have reduced the reliance on paper in the past few years.

This year, our largest project will be implementing a new backend for all InScribe applications. Starting with the Propylon Core 5 framework, we have customized the database backend in ways that we believe best meet the operational needs and workflow of the General Assembly, while enabling ongoing innovation by our OTS team members. The initial conversion

work is already done; and we are currently testing the integration points between the new backend, which we're calling CoreIndiana, and each INscribe application. Our goal is to have CoreIndiana live in production by the end of June 2018.

Maine

By Kevin Dieterich, Director, Office of Legislative Information Technology, Maine

The Maine Legislature convenes in December and continues through a statutory adjournment on the third Wednesday in June for the first regular session in the year of an election. The second regular session is January of the following year through the statutory adjournment the third Wednesday in April, and both may be extended as needed to complete the work.

The second regular session is limited by the Constitution of Maine "to budgetary matters; legislation in the Governor's call; legislation of an emergency nature admitted by the Legislature; legislation referred to committees for study and report by the Legislature in the first regular session; and legislation presented to the Legislature by written petition of the electors."

The Maine Office of Legislative Information Technology (LIT) supports 35 Senators and 151 voting members and three non-voting Tribal Representatives in the Maine House of Representatives. The office also supports about 135 non-partisan staff and about 95 caucus staff.

LIT has staff that support all technology and systems used in both chambers in support of the legislative process. The House has a skilled IT person who assists with House internal needs for reporting and workflow systems development, and works with LIT in a collaborative service-based environment.

The office supports all electronic systems used by the offices, including computers, voting systems, audio, video, servers, networks, web servers and services. LIT has 11 employees,

with staff allocated to handle all traditional IT aspects, including software development/ support, network and server services, web site maintenance support and development, desktop PC and printer support and help desk staff. The office also handles all telecommunications/ phone services.

LIT also supports BYOD for all support staff and legislators. Support is basic and includes assisting with connecting to the Legislature's public wireless, wireless printers, chamber web-based systems for access to bills, and access and use of the Legislature's Exchange-based webmail portal. Basic PC troubleshooting is offered depending on workload and is limited. More complex hardware and OS related issues are not handled as part of the basic LIT support guidelines due to concerns with accountability.

Outside of a number of server-side projects and normal PC replacements planned for the interim, our primary focus and project for next two to three years is the implementation of a new bill production system.

The LIT staff, through the Director of the Office of Legislative Information Technology, reports administratively to the Legislature's Executive Director and operationally to the Legislative Council. Governance of IT operations, roles, responsibilities, project prioritization and funding is currently handled informally on an as-needed basis.

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 Jeff Ford, NALIT Secretary, at jeff.ford@iga.in.gov. Here is some of the information to include in your state's IT profile narrative:

- What is your normal legislative assembly schedule?
  - o Convene and adjournment schedule.
  - o Any constitutional limitations on legislative days.
  - o Session types.
- How many members and staff are supported by IT?
  - o Number of legislative members by chamber.
  - o Number of full and/or part time legislative assembly staff, including types of staff.

- o Number of council staff.
- o Any offsite locations supported.
- Do you have IT staff that support specific chambers or caucuses? If so, what does the IT staff support versus overall IT support staff?
- What areas of IT does your office support, and how many staff support each area?
- Do you support "bring your own devices" or do you provide equipment to members and staff?
- How is your IT organization governed?
- Major project information.
  - o Any major projects in progress that you want to share?
- Provide a website link to your IT or office website.

NCSL Legislative Summit

Attending the NCSL Legislative Summit is a fantastic opportunity to learn from a variety of sources and perspectives. NALIT will be sponsoring the following sessions at the Summit, which also offers dozens of other professional development and policy sessions.

- Responding to New Security Threats in Legislatures.
- Security in the Cloud.
- Transforming Technology Needs into Deeds.
- Budgeting for and Identifying Best Practices for IT Projects.

You'll also want to attend the annual NALIT Business Meeting and the NALIT Dutch Treat dinner at a local restaurant. For more information, visit www.ncsl.org/nalit and www.ncsl.org/summit.

NALIT: A History

By Pam Greenberg, NCSL Liaison to NALIT

In 1980, a forward-thinking group of legislative staff who had been talking informally at NCSL meetings petitioned NCSL to establish a new staff section for computer staff. Their rationale was that the experience of these staff "would be invaluable to those states using computer applications, those states just getting started or to those who were in the 'thought' process."

That same year, Commodore released the VIC-20 home computer—the first computer to sell more than a million units.

NALIT's first logo.

NCSL's governing body agreed there was a need, and the Computer Applications Staff Section (CASS) was born. The first bylaws for the group extended membership not just to legislative staff, but also to state executive agency employees with responsibility for legislative systems. Most states didn't have a separate legislative computer support agency until 1975, and some still operated under executive branch support.

By 1985, CASS had adopted new bylaws that removed mention of executive branch employees, reflecting a growing movement toward establishing independent computer systems and support for legislatures.

CASS published its first 50-state roster of legislative computer contacts that year, and also began publishing regular newsletters. Members of CASS, according to one article, were "somewhat evangelical in their attempts to get clerks, secretaries, fiscal analysts, bill drafters and researchers—many of whom viewed IT as an unnecessary evil—to use computers."

During the late '80s and early '90s, the CASS newsletter articles highlighted how state legislatures were offering online access to legislative information via telephone and computer dialup. Wang PCs, mainframe computers and voting boards kept CASS members busy.

For example, a 1987 CASS Newsletter article reported that "Iowa legislators can now use their own personal computers

and modems to access the legislative computer from their homes," but "the PCs used must run software to emulate a VT-100 terminal."

In 1992, CASS members voted to change the name of the association to the National Association of Legislative Information Technology (NALIT) to "accurately reflect the role of staff managing diverse information technologies in legislatures today."

Those early expanding technologies included providing email for legislators and staff to use and providing legislative information for the public via internet servers. NALIT members were developing and managing networks and databases, chamber automation, fiscal systems, and bill status and drafting systems. And by the end of 1997, 46 state legislatures had a website.

As the technology expanded, so did the membership of NALIT—and they looked for information that only their colleagues in other legislatures could provide. To meet that need, the association held its first professional development

NALIT's current logo.

seminar in Fall 1997 in St. Paul, Minn., and has followed up with annual seminars since.

The host of that first seminar, and one of the founding members of CASS and NALIT, was Jim Greenwalt, now former director of Senate Information Systems in Minnesota, and a past NCSL staff chair. Almost 20 years ago, Greenwalt was asked by NCSL's "State Legislatures" magazine about technological changes coming to legislatures.

"Jim Greenwalt predicts that early in the next century, as bandwidth and computer speeds increase, video mail will be as common as email is now. You will be able to reach anyone, anywhere, anytime through pocket-sized or smaller devices. The convergence of these technologies will provide instant access and, potentially, information overload. 'We are wrapping an electronic chain around our necks and will not be able to get away,' says Greenwalt.

"Technology could also dramatically alter how legislators make decisions. 'In the future, it will be possible to create expert

systems that will sort through information, assess options and make recommendations with respect to policies.'

Greenwalt was right on target, and brings us up to date with much of the technology that NALIT members have helped to usher in to legislatures in the years since. NALIT continues to serve as the best place for legislative IT staff to share experiences and spark innovation in state legislatures.

Call for NALIT Nominations

Would you like to make valuable contacts, learn more about IT in other legislatures, and be involved in planning the NALIT Professional Development Seminar and Legislative Summit programs?

Consider being involved in NALIT! The 2018 NALIT Nominating Committee is seeking candidates to run for the office of secretary. The deadline for nominations is **June 15, 2018**.

The primary role of the secretary is to record minutes of meetings and to solicit articles for and publish the NALIT newsletter at least twice annually. Serving as secretary is a great way to share your ideas and provide direction for NALIT while working with a great group of people.

Typically, the secretary succeeds the following years to the office of vice chair and then chair. In those roles, you will serve on the NCSL Legislative Staff Coordinating committee, which meets four times a year in various locations. Attending all the meetings is not mandatory, but is a worthwhile way to represent NALIT.

If you are interested in serving in NALIT, please contact Nominating Committee Chair Linda Wettstone at lwettstone@senate.virginia.gov and Pam Greenberg at pam.greenberg@ncsl.org by **Friday, June 15**, **2018**. Members of the nominating committee are Linda Wettstone, Senate of Virginia; Gary Wieman, Nebraska; and Dale Gow, Montana.

You can also volunteer to serve as one of six NALIT directors, who, along with the four NALIT officers, make up the executive committee. Contact any of the current NALIT officers if you are interested in serving as a director.

2017 NALIT Seminar, Annapolis: A Look Back

Visiting the Maryland State House.

Live streaming the Office 365 session from the State House.

Roundtables—one of the most valuable aspects of the PDS.

Photos courtesy Hanley Loller, Programmer/Analyst, Legislative Research Commission, Kentucky

2018 NALIT Seminar, Nashville A Look Ahead: Sept 11-14

The 2018 NALIT PDS will be held in Music City, Nashville, Tenn. on Sept. 11-14, 2018. The seminar provides a combination of educational sessions, tours and briefings by our host state at the Tennessee State Capitol, legislative showcases and vendor exhibits and plenty of opportunities to talk with your colleagues in other state legislatures.

The PDS begins mid-day on Tuesday, Sept. 11 with Legislative Showcases. We are looking for volunteers to show their applications in an informal, exhibit-style format. Other sessions that highlight IT issues specific to legislatures include the "Five Minutes of Fame" session, a fast-paced session that highlights projects underway or recently completed. Roundtables each day give attendees the opportunity to ask questions and share solutions informally.

The seminar will also feature security sessions each day, reflecting the growing importance of the issue. Other topics to be covered include intelligent systems and artificial intelligence, Office 365, big data and data visualization tools, recruiting and retaining IT staff, and other sessions covering the many different aspects of legislative IT work. Plan to attend and register now!

Celebrating Legislative Staff

Legislative staff, the defenders of the institution, the guardians of the legislative process, the backstage stalwarts who keep democracy rolling—seldom get the attention they deserve. Many staff like it that way. But NCSL knows how vital they are to every state legislature.

NCSL designated a week last December as **Legislative Staff Week**, and will do so again the week of **May 14-18.** We celebrate your contributions, appreciate your hard work and encourage each one of you to get involved in NCSL. We are your organization.

Look for stories about legislative staff and more on NCSL's website, blog, social media pages, and the "Our American States" podcast. Mark your calendar and check out Legislative Staff Week at www.ncsl.org.

NALIT Executive Committee

The NALIT Executive Committee is made up of the four officers and six directors. It guides NALIT efforts in all areas, including sessions and activities at the NCSL Legislative Summit, outreach to NALIT members and other programs and activities.

NALIT officers are the chair, the vice-chair, secretary and past chair. The terms of officers commence at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected and continue through the next ensuing annual meeting.

2017-18 OFFICERS

Chair: Kyle Forster
Information Technology Manager
North Dakota Legislative Assembly

Vice Chair: Cindy O'Dell
Service and Support Manager
Kentucky Legislative Research Commission

Secretary: Jeff Ford
Chief Technology Officer
Indiana Legislative Services Agency, Office of Technology Services

Past Chair: Linda Wettstone
Senior Systems Analyst
Virginia Senate Clerk's Office

Call for Newsletter Articles

This newsletter would not be possible without contributions from our members. If you have ideas for articles—short or long—please contact Jeff Ford, Chief Technical Officer, Indiana, NALIT Secretary and Newsletter Editor, at jeff.ford@iga.in.gov.

DIRECTORS

Directors are appointed by the NALIT Chair. Directors serve staggered two-year terms, i.e., three are appointed in even years; three are appointed in odd years. The terms of office of the NALIT Directors commence at the close of the annual NALIT Business Meeting after which they are appointed and continue two years until the next Business Meeting.

Scott Darnall
IT Director
South Dakota Legislature
Term of Office: August 2016-August 2018

Rebecca Garcia
Project Lead
Texas Legislative Council
Term of Office: August 2016-August 2018

Jim Bell
Director, Senate Technology Services
New York State Senate
Term of Office: August 2017-August 2019

Doug Farr
IT Manager
Utah Office of Legislative Research & General Counsel
Term of Office: August 2017-August 2019

Kelly Stallings
Development Team Leader
North Carolina General Assembly
Term of Office: August 2016-August 2018

Brian Hansen
IT Director
Legislative Computer Center
Alabama Legislature
Term of Office: August 2017-August 2019