

**Testimony To
THE INTERIM INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
Prepared April 4, 2012 by
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REGARDING TECHNOLOGY SERVICE COORDINATION

Chairman Weisz and members of the Information Technology Committee; thank you for the request to talk about State/county coordination in this important area. As you undoubtedly are aware; counties, as the service arm of State government, are very closely linked to many State agencies through a variety of electronic systems.

Although I have noted some of this in past testimony, many of you are new to this interim committee; and it quite possibly bears repeating. Every business day:

- 330 county social service eligibility workers are accessing and updating the four separate economic assistance software systems – something your Special Session action to consolidate promises to greatly improve;
- 250 county social workers are interacting with the various children and adult service case management systems;
- Clerks of court in all 53 counties are accessing the Uniform Court Information System and the Child Support Enforcement System;
- County Recorders are indexing Uniform Commercial Code documents on the Secretary of State's UCC system as well as utilizing the State's StageNet connectivity to archive land record images in two separate location (Fargo, Bismarck);
- County Auditors, throughout a two-year election cycle, utilize a single, centralized election pollbook, uniform software for the creation of election ballots, and the for the rapid, statewide reporting of election results – ensuring the consistency and integrity of our election system ;
- County risk managers are making online incident reports of any employee injuries to Workforce Safety;
- County sheriffs and their deputies are accessing criminal history, drivers license, vehicle registration, and intelligence information through the Criminal Justice Information System hub, often times through mobile data terminals right in their vehicles;
- County Emergency managers, especially this time of year, are constantly interfacing with the State's "WebEOC" for the coordination of local, state and national emergency resources;

- County Veteran's Service Officers are accessing State and federal eligibility systems to seek and secure benefits for our State's veterans;
- Seven of our State's 21 remote drivers' licensing sites are operated by county officials. These sites access the NDDOT system for efficient, local access that reduces citizen costs.
- 28 county public health unit locations regularly leverage StageNet's video conferencing capabilities for training and medical disaster planning.
- County highway departments, extension agents, county health nurses, and many others must communicate electronically with their counterparts in State government in order to serve the citizens of our State most efficiently.

The coordination of the technology to make this all happen is complex but essential to the efficient delivery of services authorized by the Legislature and demanded by our citizens.

The staff and facilities of the Information Technology Department provide the structure that makes possible this complex coordination. ITD, through StageNet, provides the network connectivity, internet access, firewall security, video conferencing and secure wireless access that support these many applications.

As viewed from the county perspective, ITD brings the network to the courthouse door and maintains that network for a monthly fee. Counties then implement, manage and maintain the local network within the courthouse that connects into StageNet. These separate, but interlinked responsibilities require continuous communication and ongoing planning to ensure the best, but most economical, network possible.

ITD personnel meet regularly with the technology specialists of the NDACo Resources Group (NRG) to discuss issues and strategize about future improvements and enhancements. Discussions address such things as the growing need for Virtual Private Network (VPN) access for the numerous county employees that are constantly moving among counties in shared service roles, or ITD's current efforts to enhance StageNet's bandwidth.

NDACo and ITD have also gone beyond planning in their working relationship, assisting each other regarding networking and desktop support, whether it's with counties or state government, to maximize the limited personnel particularly in the more rural areas of the State.

In summary, counties are pleased with the services they receive from ITD, and are committed to maintaining and enhancing the technology resources that we share.