

Task Force on Local Government Information Systems

ITS Response and Recommendations

December 19, 2003



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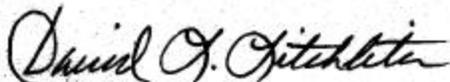
Honorable Amy Tuck
Lieutenant Governor
State of Mississippi

Honorable Tim Ford
Speaker of the House
Mississippi House of Representatives

The Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) respectfully submits the enclosed report from the Task Force on Local Government Information Systems created by House Bill 992 during the 2003 Session. ITS has reviewed the recommendations of the Task Force and has proposed legislation to implement these recommendations in the enclosed ITS Response and Recommendations to the report.

If you would like to further discuss the report and recommendations, please contact me at 359-1395.

Sincerely,



David L. Litchliter

Enclosures

- (1) Task Force on Local Government Information Systems – ITS Response and Recommendations
- (2) Report of the Task Force on Local Government Information Systems to ITS

C: Honorable Mary Ann Stevens, Chairman, PEER Committee
Dr. Max Arinder, Executive Director, PEER Committee

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	3
II. Background	4
A. PEER Report #430, A Review of County Information Systems	4
B. House Bill 992	4
C. Statewide Frame Relay/ATM Backbone Network	5
D. Advances in Networking Technology	6
III. Task Force Recommendation Summary	7
IV. Additional Provisions in House Bill 992	9
V. Legislative Recommendation – Extend House Bill 992 Repealer	13
VI. Legislative Recommendation – Network Consolidation	13
VII. Funding for the Network Consolidation	15

ITS Response and Recommendations

I. Executive Summary

On April 20, 2003, the Governor signed House Bill 992 creating the Task Force on Local Government Information Systems, hereinafter referred to as the Task Force. In reviewing the Report compiled by the Task Force, ITS supports and recognizes the work completed to date; however, equally important is recognition by ITS that the elements set forth in House Bill 992 will require a greater time period than was rendered the Task Force to formulate reasonable suggestions. To that end, ITS has reviewed and commented favorably upon the primary recommendation areas presented in the Task Force Report. In addition, ITS has compiled observations and recommendations on subject areas outlined in House Bill 992 that the Task Force was not able to consider.

Furthermore, in addition to commenting on the recommendations presented, as well as compiling additional observations, ITS developed two specific legislative recommendations:

1. In recognition of the study required to develop recommendations consistent with those mandated in House Bill 992, ITS supports the recommendation that the repealer in House Bill 992 be extended to June 30, 2005. Within this context, ITS fully supports that the legislative charge be modified if determined appropriate, and that the membership of the Task Force be reviewed to ensure appropriate representation of all statewide initiatives underway that include significant information technology components.
2. Upon convening, the Task Force members became aware of the multiple strategic initiatives progressing currently in the State at various levels of government. These active strategic initiatives vary in scope, breadth, impact, and enabling entity. Immediately apparent to the Task Force was the potential to aggregate and share bandwidth when multiple entities are co-located. Given the Task Force recommendation for consolidated network infrastructures, ITS has developed a specific recommendation for the funding and development of a project to consolidate bandwidth to each county seat. ITS is requesting the 2004 Legislature to provide \$1M initial costs for a high-speed, secure network connection between state and county governments; in addition to the initial costs, there will be a need for \$0.75M/year for ongoing leasing of circuits. In addition, ITS requests the 2004 Legislature to provide the following infrastructure funding: \$125,000 initial costs for a high-speed, secure network connection between state and 10 pilot municipal governments; in addition to the initial costs, there will be a need for \$85,000/year for ongoing leasing of circuits.

ITS recognizes the Legislature's intent in creating the Task Force to be responsible for assessing needs, developing policy and standards for development, and formulating funding strategies for local government information systems. Additionally, as presented in PEER Report #430, *A Review of County Information Systems*, ITS recognizes the needs which exist to develop additional state-local systems to provide timely, accurate, and accessible information, which meet minimal communication/processing standards. ITS believes that the best way to continue work in that direction is the continuance of the Task Force.

Evident through the work accomplished by the Task Force was the observation and documentation that the delivery and exchange of information using standard processes, policies, and architecture among different levels of government presented an opportunity for action. As pointed out in the PEER Report #430, this delivery and exchange of data could and should take advantage of cost efficiencies and minimize redundant use of resources. ITS believes that the technical tools for efficiently sharing information across geographic and political boundaries exist and have been proven to be effective, as evidenced by the Statewide Frame Relay/ATM Backbone Network currently in place. To begin to leverage the availability and utility of government information, ITS is recommending the funding and development of a shared circuit to each county courthouse for access to a scalable, stable, multi-protocol network for providing statewide networking solutions.

II. Background

A. PEER Report #430, A Review of County Information Systems

PEER recommended the creation of the Task Force after conducting a study of county information systems, entitled *A Review of County Information Systems*, PEER Report # 430. In its study, PEER evaluated the county information systems currently being used in seven counties. PEER sought to determine the status of the systems including voter registration and other data management, the ability to meet state-level reporting, public accessibility, and alternatives for development of efficient, uniform systems which would be compatible among county and state level systems.

PEER discovered that each county developed its system independently choosing what information to include on its system and how that information was to be stored. PEER found that the lack of uniformity impeded public access and hindered the ability to share information among the counties or at the state level. PEER also noted several other ongoing independent initiatives to develop information systems being conducted by the State Tax Commission, Office of the State Auditor, Administrative Office of the Courts, and Secretary of State's Office, as well as, the development of local geographic information systems across the state.

PEER concluded that ITS should oversee and coordinate the development of information systems that provide accurate information to the public in a user-friendly environment and further improve the economy of local system development and implementation by developing and hosting shared information resources. A statewide Task Force was to be created to provide recommendations to ITS on policy development and standards.

B. House Bill 992

In response to PEER's Report #430, the Mississippi Legislature created a statewide Task Force on Local Government Information Systems. The membership of the Task Force includes twenty-two members, most of whom represent state agencies and local government representatives involved in state/local government information systems, as well as two members of the Legislature and two citizen members.

House Bill 992 required that the Task Force develop a report to be delivered to ITS no later than October 1, 2003. The report, at a minimum, was to address the following:

- (a) A description of the current condition of information technology services available to the public in the offices of the chancery clerks, circuit clerks, tax assessors, and tax collectors of the State of Mississippi;
- (b) Recommendations on the hardware and software needs to create user-friendly, uniform systems for public access to court records, land records, tax records, and all other public documents maintained by chancery clerks, circuit clerks, tax assessors, and tax collectors in all counties of the state;
- (c) Recommendations or comments regarding system compatibility and economy of those systems being developed under the Secretary of State's authority to develop and implement a statewide voter registration system, as required by Congress in Public Law 107-252;
- (d) Recommendations or comments on any initiative to establish and implement a uniform Geographic Information System (GIS) in each county of the state;
- (e) Recommendations on methods of funding software, hardware, and telecommunications acquisitions necessary for each county to comply with the task force recommendations;
- (f) Recommendations for the use of world wide web-based systems for accessing the public information systems recommended in paragraph (b) of this section; and
- (g) Recommendations on the hardware and software needs necessary to comply with homeland security requirements of the federal government relating to state agencies, counties, and municipal government.

Upon receipt of the report, ITS was to review the report and make recommendations to the Legislature no later than December 15, 2003, regarding legislation that would be necessary to implement the recommendations of the Task Force.

C. Statewide Frame Relay/ATM Backbone Network

In 1994, a major initiative for Mississippi educational institutions directed the State toward an alternative to the existing Digital Backbone Network. Under Senate Bills 3350 and 2945, funding was made available to the educational community for technology enhancements. With this technology initiative, K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and public libraries began to plan for inter-networking solutions to provide real time access to online informational databases. These solutions were designed to provide connection between the prospective locations, enabling them to share educational and administrative data and improve access to the Internet.

BellSouth was awarded a contract in 1995 that established public Frame Relay switches in seven locations across the state (Greenwood; Memphis, TN; Tupelo; Meridian; Jackson; Hattiesburg; and Gulfport). In 1999, BellSouth was awarded the contract for Frame Relay and ATM

IntraLATA services that included guaranteed dedicated bandwidth between the switches statewide, thus allowing the State to be treated as an enterprise customer. This aggregation of regional switches, the dedicated bandwidth between them, and the Jackson hub make up the Frame Relay/ATM Backbone Network. State agencies purchase local access circuits at a statewide fixed rate to access the backbone. K-12 public schools, community colleges, universities, public libraries, and state agencies now utilize the Frame Relay/ATM Backbone, a TCP/IP network.

The ITS partnership with BellSouth has provided an opportunity for the State to realize dramatic cost savings under the Schools and Libraries Program, also known as E-Rate. Established by Congress to help make advanced telecommunications affordable for the Nation's K-12 schools and libraries, E-Rate allows discounts on the costs of eligible telecommunications services, Internet access, and internal connections ranging from 20 percent to 90 percent. In the first five years of the E-Rate program schools and libraries, nationwide, have received over \$10 billion; while schools and libraries in Mississippi have received \$157.7 million. These dollars have been in the form of discounts on telecommunications services, Internet access, and internal connections within the schools and libraries.

D. Advances in Networking Technology

DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), a technology for bringing high-bandwidth information to homes and small businesses over ordinary copper telephone lines, represents an advancement in networking technology that ITS is exploring. Assuming a home or small business is close enough to a telephone company central office that offers DSL service, typical individual connections will provide from 1.544 Mbps to 512 Kbps downstream and about 128 Kbps upstream. The emergence of DSL has created some issues in continued growth of the statewide network, including security, reliability, performance, and support. While DSL has created the appearance of a cost effective, high performance alternative, there are issues that require thoughtful consideration:

Business Class DSL

The following issues relate to Business Class DSL:

- ⇒ You must have ATM at the terminating end of the DSL line.
- ⇒ This is a month-to-month service. Rates are not locked in under the current contract.

Fast Access DSL

The following applies to a standard fast access offering:

- ⇒ IP addresses must be acquired from the provider. The State's private IP addresses cannot be used.
- ⇒ The State will not be the support entity for Fast Access DSL. The provider would handle any and all troubleshooting.

- ⇒ Any connectivity to the State must be accomplished through a Virtual Private Network (VPN). The remote users will have to create a LAN-to-LAN VPN or run a VPN client on their workstations in order to connect to the agency.
- ⇒ Equipment ordering and installation will be coordinated through the provider.
- ⇒ This service is "best effort." There are no guaranteed service levels or guarantees regarding repair intervals or response.
- ⇒ A state contract is not currently available for this service.

ITS does not currently have an acceptable DSL alternative on a statewide contract. However, ITS is currently working with the statewide telecomm provider to add several "flavors" of DSL to the statewide contract. This newly negotiated contract will minimize risk and provide a low cost alternative, which can be acquired with the added advantage of being on a state contract to address repair intervals, volume pricing, escalation procedures, and ease of procurement. The alternatives being pursued include options that will provide for DSL that participates on the State's Intranet as well as an alternative for an Internet based DSL that would require VPNs and specific security policy requirements.

III. Task Force Recommendation Summary

In carrying out its directive, the Task Force created a Vision Statement based on five overarching areas of concentration thought to incorporate the directive in House Bill 992: (1) Communication Access; (2) Collaboration/Coordination; (3) Standardization; (4) Fiscal Responsibility; and (5) Governance.

Summary Task Force Recommendations

Communication Access – The Task Force recognized the potential to aggregate and share bandwidth when multiple entities are co-located. The Task Force encouraged consolidation of network infrastructures and use of aggregated access to the State's shared network infrastructure, stating that enterprise connectivity had the potential to reduce costs and enhance the quality of service delivery.

- ⇒ **ITS Recommendation:** ITS recognizes and supports the Task Force recommendation encouraging network consolidation. To that end, ITS has, within this Legislative report, developed a specific recommendation for the funding and development of a project to consolidate bandwidth to each county seat.

Collaboration/Coordination – The Task Force acknowledged that a broader, yet more focused coordination was needed to ensure that the multiple independent initiatives currently underway across the state were implemented more efficiently and cost effectively. State and local governments seeking to implement new systems would benefit from the sharing of common data, processes, and transactions. The Task Force recommends that the repealer in House Bill 992 be extended to June 30, 2005, that the legislative charge be modified to address the need for this overall coordination, and that the membership of the Task Force be reviewed to ensure appropriate representation of all statewide initiatives underway that include significant information technology components.

⇒ **ITS Recommendation:** ITS recognizes the breadth of study required to develop recommendations consistent with those mandated in House Bill 992. The Task Force has begun the ambitious task of carrying out this directive. ITS supports the recommendation that the repealer in House Bill 992 be extended to June 30, 2005, that the legislative charge be modified if determined appropriate, and that the membership of the Task Force be reviewed to ensure appropriate representation of all statewide initiatives underway that include significant information technology components.

Standardization – State and local governments would also benefit from established standards and policies. The development of a statewide technical architecture would help eliminate redundant networks and related platforms and assist in the implementation of information interchange and interoperability standards. Once established, these standards should reduce the time spent on developing new systems and improve the ability to transfer and share data.

⇒ **ITS Recommendation:** ITS has begun the process of developing an Enterprise Architecture for state government. Inevitably, as state government interfaces with local government information systems and infrastructure, these architectural standards will be shared among various government entities. ITS supports the Task Force position, however a greater degree of work needs to be accomplished to fully realize the potential of a statewide technical architecture. ITS recommends the Task Force continues the initial work begun in this area.

Fiscal Responsibility – The independent development of local government information systems without any coordination is costly and inefficient. Government should seize any opportunities to control spending and eliminate unnecessary or duplicative expenditures. The Task Force recommends the deployment of enterprise solutions as a means for reducing acquisition and support expenditures across the enterprise such as utilizing a universal information system that meets the needs of state and local governments. The Task Force could also establish methods to better coordinate and leverage federal funds, to better coordinate and share common infrastructures, to better coordinate county and municipal funds on similar technology needs, and to better coordinate and consolidate multi-agency funding for similar purposes.

⇒ **ITS Recommendation:** ITS supports the enterprise concept as it applies to both software and hardware infrastructure. Often, as is seen in the work ITS accomplishes daily, the deployment of enterprise solutions can serve as a means for reducing acquisition and support expenditures across the enterprise. ITS recognizes and supports the efforts of the Task Force; however, a greater degree of work needs to be accomplished to fully realize the potential of better coordination of federal funds, better coordination of shared infrastructures, better coordination of county and municipal funds on similar technology needs, and better coordination of multi-agency funding for similar purposes. ITS recommends the Task Force continues the initial work begun in this area.

Governance – The Task Force recommends the creation of a governance structure comprised of both local and state government representatives. The governing body should, with guidance and recommendations from ITS, develop standards and policies, as well as, assist in the coordination and collaboration among local governments and/or state agencies on common application systems and on procurement of common technologies.

⇒ **ITS Recommendation:** ITS supports the Governance concept, given that proper and full state and local government representation is considered. ITS recognizes and supports the efforts of the Task Force; however, a greater degree of work needs to be accomplished to fully realize the potential of governance with respect to the development of standards and policies and the coordination and collaboration among state and local government agencies on common application systems and on procurement of common infrastructures.

IV. Additional Provisions in House Bill 992

As stated in the Executive Summary, ITS supports and recognizes the work completed to date in the Report compiled by the Task Force; however, equally important is recognition by ITS that the elements set forth in House Bill 992 will require a greater time period than was rendered the Task Force to formulate reasonable suggestions. To that end, ITS has compiled observations and recommendations on subject areas outlined in House Bill 992 that the Task Force was not able to fully consider. The report, at a minimum, needed to address the following:

A description of the current condition of information technology services available to the public in the offices of the chancery clerks, circuit clerks, tax assessors, and tax collectors of the State of Mississippi.

Work Accomplished by Task Force:

As a starting point, the Task Force compiled a body of data from previous surveys and published studies, in an effort to focus on the known issues about local government information systems and their viability for data sharing and mutual communications. As noted in the Task Force Report, the bodies of data utilized for the focus were:

- ⇒ Administrative Office of Courts survey conducted in 1997-1998 which assesses capabilities of the chancery, circuit, county, youth, municipal and justice courts, and the tax collectors' and tax assessors' offices, (i.e. the CourtCom Associates Study);
- ⇒ Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts survey on Statewide Infrastructure Needs, conducted in 1999;
- ⇒ Office of the Secretary of State survey of counties for the voter registration project, conducted in 2001;
- ⇒ Data compiled for the Criminal Case Management Information Sharing System in conjunction with the Tri-County Automated System Project.

The PEER Report #430 also named these data sources; however, much of this data was too dated to be of real value. To update the data available on local government information systems, the Task Force spent a considerable amount of time developing several new survey forms: (1) an application survey sent to the county government offices; (2) a hardware survey sent to the vendors serving county government; (3) a state agency survey; and (4) a municipal government survey.

The survey work represents a large portion of the total Task Force effort. According to the Report, the application survey results show that at least 85% of the tax assessor and tax collector offices have automated their tax rolls, homestead exemption, unpaid taxes, automobile tags, and

land sales. The Boards of Supervisors accounting programs and the Justice Court records are the next most automated at the 75-85% level. Automation levels for the Chancery and Circuit courts are reported at the 40-50% level. Law Enforcement Dispatch is automated at the 50% level with arrest records and offense records at a lower level of automation. Only ten counties were found to have any kind of automated records available via the Internet, but twenty-three counties do have terminals available for use by the public to access records. With respect to the hardware, state agency, and municipal government surveys, the Task Force did not make specific recommendations regarding hardware, software, or world wide web-based systems needed to create uniform, user-friendly systems for public access to documents.

ITS Recommendation:

The Report notes that the Task Force expected to find, as PEER did in Report #430, that the independent development of information systems across state government fails to take advantage of economies of scale and impedes the transfer and accessibility of data. ITS supports the data collected and work completed to date. While the Task Force did initiate survey instruments to collect current data, ITS recommends that the Task Force continue its work with a specific focus on the formulation of recommendations, as outlined in House Bill 992.

Recommendations on the hardware and software needs to create user-friendly, uniform systems for public access to court records, land records, tax records, and all other public documents maintained by chancery clerks, circuit clerks, tax assessors, and tax collectors in all counties of the state.

Recommendations on methods of funding software, hardware, and telecommunications acquisitions necessary for each county to comply with the task force recommendations.

Recommendations for the use of world wide web-based systems for accessing the public information systems.

Work Accomplished by Task Force:

The Task Force did not make specific recommendations regarding hardware, software, or world wide web-based systems needed to create uniform, user-friendly systems for public access to documents. The general consensus of the Task Force, however, was that any recommendations should be based on an open architecture and solutions that are not tied to any specific vendor.

ITS Recommendations and Observations:

In reviewing the Report compiled by the Task Force, ITS supports and recognizes the work completed to date; however, equally important is recognition by ITS that the elements set forth in House Bill 992 will require a greater time period than was rendered the Task Force to formulate reasonable suggestions. To that end, ITS supports the recommendation that the repealer in House Bill 992 be extended to June 30, 2005. In terms of providing access to public information and to begin to leverage the availability and utility of government information, ITS is recommending the funding and development of a shared circuit to each county courthouse for access to a scalable, stable, multi-protocol network for providing statewide networking solutions.

Furthermore, ITS believes that the Task Force should continue to meet and work towards the improvement of local government efforts to plan, design, program, implement, and operate information systems. Specific areas of interest should be:

- ⇒ Provide a forum for the purposeful sharing of ideas, information systems resources, standards, and problem solving techniques.
- ⇒ Promote simplified standards.
- ⇒ Consult with, and inform state and local government entities on legislative and regulatory issues that affect them.
- ⇒ Share practical experiences and ideas related to the development of information systems.
- ⇒ Facilitate dialogues with local government administrators served by information systems.

Each day there are technological advances that could have a dramatic effect on both state and local governments. ITS recognizes the individual technology investments made by local governments across Mississippi. However, it is impractical for each political subdivision to evaluate and test all new technologies. If, on the other hand, a group of governments join together to leverage current vendor agreements and technical requirements, costs could be significantly reduced and all could derive benefits more quickly. ITS would strongly urge the Task Force to meaningfully engage the vendor community to discuss these opportunities. While ITS supports the use of open architectures and vendor-neutral solutions for new development, local governments could currently benefit from common requirements, joint development, and consortium contracting for the enhancement of current information systems.

In the past, funding for infrastructure has been attained through various means. Until recently, state agencies received infrastructure funding as part of ongoing projects. In many cases, this mechanism resulted in insufficient funds. ITS often had to build infrastructure and charge back the costs to agencies. With the continued economic strain on government budgets, the role of information technology must take a more prominent position as a solution that enables increased efficiencies and cost reductions through streamlining government business processes and integrating infrastructure, all the while improving the efficiency and ease with which government serves its citizens.

Many government entities have begun to harness information technology to provide better information and more efficient services to citizens and businesses, and to secure cost savings for the taxpayer through improved delivery mechanisms. In particular, government agencies and departments, and intergovernmental bodies have begun to use the World Wide Web on an increasing basis for dissemination of a variety of public information, such as on legislative, policy and regulatory developments. Governments also have begun to use electronic services, such as for tax filings and procurement.

Recommendations or comments regarding system compatibility and economy of those systems being developed under the Secretary of State's authority to develop and implement a statewide voter registration system, as required by Congress in Public Law 107-252.

Work Accomplished by Task Force:

The Statewide Voter Registration Advisory Committee and the Secretary of State's Office have been working on establishing a single statewide voter registration list required by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The Secretary of State, as the state's chief election official, will maintain a single, centralized voter file. The voter database is to be managed by the county elections officials with software provided by the state. The database and software will be maintained on a centralized server and accessed through a secure network by the counties. The statewide voter registration project is on schedule and once HAVA is fully funded, the Secretary of State should be in a position to procure and implement the system as required.

ITS Observation:

ITS remains committed to working with the Secretary of State, where appropriate, in the establishment of a single statewide voter registration file, as required by HAVA. Discussions have already been initiated between ITS and the Secretary of State to foster a dialogue to ensure that the technical requirements of HAVA are met to the full approval of the Secretary of State. ITS believes that the work begun by the Local Government Task Force will ensure open communication and produce technical recommendations which could be leveraged by the Secretary of State in accomplishing the HAVA mandate, as well as multiple other applications.

Recommendations or comments on any initiative to establish and implement a uniform Geographic Information System (GIS) in each county of the state;

Work Accomplished by Task Force:

The Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems is responsible for the coordination of remote sensing and geographic information system activities and the establishment and enforcement of standards that will make it easier for users to share data and to facilitate cost-sharing arrangements to reduce data acquisition costs. The coordinating council's authority covers local, regional, and state governmental agencies except for the institutions of higher learning.

The coordinating council also provides direction and oversight of ITS's development and maintenance of the GIS data warehouse and of Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's management, procurement, development, and maintenance of the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM) which will include seven core data layers of a digital land base computer model of the State of Mississippi, and provide the basis for a uniform GIS in each county. The Task Force recommends that the coordinating council, as it carries out its statutory mission, continue to coordinate with the Task Force and other statewide technology initiatives.

ITS Recommendation:

House Bill 861 was aimed at creating statewide coordination and sharing of geographic data. The Council is also responsible for overseeing the development of the Mississippi Digital Earth Model (MDEM). ITS continues to work with the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems in the development and maintenance of the GIS data clearinghouse. As part of this project, ITS will be hosting the GIS Clearinghouse to serve as a resource for all state and local government entities and some private sector entities. This clearinghouse will reside on the State's infrastructure. ITS believes that the request to fund and

develop a shared circuit to each county courthouse would provide the Coordinating Council an effective networking solution for the sharing and distribution of geospatial data.

Recommendations on the hardware and software needs necessary to comply with homeland security requirements of the federal government relating to state agencies, counties, and municipal government.

Work Accomplished by Task Force:

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has obtained a user license and plans to work with selected counties to evaluate the Disaster Management Interoperability Services (DMIS) system, a recent initiative of the Department of Homeland Security that will enable responders, government offices, and authorized non-government organizations to share emergency management information. DMIS plans to make use of existing databases and applications with minimal intrusiveness in local incident management systems. Key to its development is an open, distributed object approach using interoperable tools and functionalities that can be re-shaped as requirements evolve.

ITS Observation:

The State of Mississippi Homeland Security effort is spearheaded by the Mississippi Emergency Management Association and includes a Governor-appointed Homeland Security Task Force. ITS is a member of this task force and heads the Working Group on Interoperable Communications. This group addresses communications that allow two or more parties, even those using disparate communications systems, to exchange information directly. With such interoperability, on-scene personnel can quickly access each other to coordinate needed rescue and emergency activities. Over the next few years, Homeland Security initiatives could bring about significant changes to infrastructure within State government. Through our participation in Homeland Security, ITS is poised to effectively implement those changes.

V. Legislative Recommendation – Extend House Bill 992 Repealer

In recognition of the study required to develop recommendations consistent with those mandated in House Bill 992, ITS supports the recommendation that the repealer in House Bill 992 be extended to June 30, 2005. Within this context, ITS fully supports that the legislative charge be modified if determined appropriate, and that the membership of the Task Force be reviewed to ensure appropriate representation of all statewide initiatives underway that include significant information technology components.

VI. Legislative Recommendation – Network Consolidation

ITS Recommendation:

ITS recognizes and supports the Task Force recommendation encouraging network consolidation. To that end, ITS has, within this Legislative report, developed a specific recommendation for the funding and development of a project to consolidate bandwidth to each county seat.

Through discussions held in Task Force working sessions, members were made aware of multiple existing and planned strategic initiatives progressing currently in the State at various

levels of government. These active strategic initiatives vary in scope, breadth, impact, and enabling entity. These statewide initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- ⇒ Task Force on Local Government Information Systems (House Bill 992, 2003 Regular Session)
- ⇒ Statewide Centralized Voter System (House Bill 2366, 2002 Regular Session)
- ⇒ Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (House Bill 861, 2003 Regular Session)
- ⇒ Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (Executive Order 874, February 5, 2003)
- ⇒ Homeland Security Coordination (Coordinated by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency)
- ⇒ Automated Financial Audits (Coordinated by the State Auditor)
- ⇒ Integrated Justice System
- ⇒ Motor Vehicle Tag and Title System (Coordinated by the State Tax Commission)

The rapid growth of data, voice, and video technologies continues to challenge the ability to link and integrate services into one seamless network that is user friendly, scalable, secure, and efficient. ITS' mission is to provide statewide leadership and services that facilitate cost effective information processing and telecommunication solutions for agencies and institutions. ITS' vision is that the Mississippi telecommunications/computing infrastructure will be a network of networks that are totally integrated, facilitating transmission of voice, video, and data technologies to government employees and citizens in every corner of the state.

Immediately apparent to the Task Force was the potential to aggregate and share bandwidth when multiple entities are co-located. Evident through the work accomplished by the Task Force was the observation and documentation that the delivery and exchange of information using standard processes, policies, and architecture among different levels of government presented an opportunity for action. As pointed out in the PEER Report #430, this delivery and exchange of data could and should take advantage of cost efficiencies and minimize redundant use of resources. ITS believes that the technical tools for efficiently sharing information across geographic and political boundaries exist and have been proven to be effective, as evidenced by the Statewide Frame Relay/ATM Backbone Network currently in place.

To build an effective statewide information infrastructure, a number of goals must be met. These goals are:

- ⇒ To ensure the availability of new technologies as their use becomes beneficial
- ⇒ To provide access to the information highway and offer government services via the Internet
- ⇒ To prioritize statewide access
- ⇒ To ensure that the infrastructure is transparent to the user, applications, and services
- ⇒ To ensure that the infrastructure has a common look and feel, and that quality and standards are built into the architecture
- ⇒ To promote cooperation, information sharing, and cost effective delivery of services among state agencies through "one network" concept by providing central management of the infrastructure, sharing of network resources, and automated accountability/billing of statewide resources

- ⇒ To ensure that funding is available to support ongoing infrastructure initiatives on a statewide basis
- ⇒ To ensure effective delivery of state services to all areas of Mississippi
- ⇒ To improve citizen access to information while meeting the need for privacy, openness, accessibility, transfer, use, and modification within authorized security levels
- ⇒ To provide distance learning training for state employees
- ⇒ To create a state-of-the-art telecommunications environment to attract high-tech business and industry
- ⇒ To present opportunities for sharing of enterprise infrastructure to further promote cost effective delivery of services
- ⇒ To enhance state telecommunications through strategic partnerships with private vendors

VII. Funding for the Network Consolidation

ITS Funding Request:

ITS requests the 2004 Legislature to provide the following infrastructure funding: \$1M initial costs for a high-speed, secure network connection between state and county governments; in addition to the initial costs, there will be a need for \$0.75M/year for ongoing leasing of circuits.

In addition, ITS requests the 2004 Legislature to provide the following infrastructure funding: \$125,000 initial costs for a high-speed, secure network connection between state and 10 pilot municipal governments; in addition to the initial costs, there will be a need for \$85,000/year for ongoing leasing of circuits.

It is noted that ITS will be presenting the same request in a report in response to the work completed via House Bill 861, which created the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems in the 2003 Legislature. ITS supports funding and development for 10 pilot municipal governments, where technically feasible, to further leverage this high-speed network infrastructure. Furthermore, ITS recommends that representatives from the 10 pilot municipal governments comprise a working focus group to provide municipal perspectives and needs for automated solutions consistent with House Bill 861 and House Bill 992.