Information Systems

The Information Systems (IS) Department is responsible for securely implementing and maintaining technology solutions for all county departments as well as the server and network infrastructure required to support them. These solutions include the multitude of applications that county staff rely on to serve Eau Claire County residents every day.

2021 Accomplishments

Leadership
- A change in IS Director occurred in July 2021 with the retirement of Dave Hayden. Many thanks to Dave for his years of service and dedication.

Applications
- **Finance** - Configured multiple financial reports to aid in gathering of data to feed to State and Federal reporting agencies
- **Office 365** - Continued deployment of SharePoint for better cross department collaboration and communication
- **Human Services** – Upgraded Avatar to NX. Moved to a web-based version of our electronic health record to reduce maintenance costs and increase functionality.
- **Human Services** - Installed OrderConnect which provides a quick means for providers to prescribe medications electronically.
- **Sheriff** – Installed software to upgrade firmware on all the Axis cameras throughout the County at once, reducing maintenance hours.
- **Contract Automation** – Automated the process flow routing new contracts to the correct individuals for approval, depending on type and cost of contract.

Infrastructure
- **Courts** - Upgraded Courtroom Branch 1 AV system. Installed AV, Wireless and networks into new Courtroom Branch 6.
- **Jail** – Replace all network core router/switches.
- **Parks** – Installed fiber network to Coon Fork Park. The network will be configured with some internet WiFi availability in the spring when the park opens.
- **Highway** – Worked with facilities on network infrastructure design of new highway facility. Installed Fiber conduit from WisDOT/State Patrol to new Highway site.
- **All County** – Upgraded the VoIP Voice System and switch from physical phone circuits to a virtual circuits which lowered our costs.
- **All County** - Upgrade VMware environment to version 7.x
- **All County** - Added AC/Humidity to air handler in the Airport Tower Datacenter
- **UPS upgrades**: Replaced UPS at Airport Tower and replace batteries in the Courthouse and Jail.
- **Compliance** - Refreshed email archive appliance with new hardware.

<u>**Cybersecurity**</u>
- Implemented multi-factor authentication for Microsoft Office 365 users
- Implemented a new service for DNS filtering
- Implemented a managed service to actively monitor our firewalls and respond to incidents 24x7x365
- Addressed Log4j vulnerabilities within county applications/services

<u>**Other projects**</u>
- Successfully launched a community broadband pilot of Starlink with 50 remote Eau Claire County residents. Overall, the pilot has shown very favorable results over the first six months.

Alignment with Strategic Plan

As shown above, IS continues to collaborate with departments and partners across the County and beyond to develop and implement innovative technology solutions. Directly or indirectly, we continue to support Eau Claire County's Strategic Plan through these efforts.

Future Opportunities

One of our biggest opportunities is to lower our Cyber Security risk. There are opportunities through Federal and State programs and grants that can help us in this space. It is critical that we keep improving our cyber posture with the ever-increasing cyber-attacks on government entities. Our challenge is going to be to do this within our current staffing levels while maintaining our current support levels across Eau Claire County departments.

Our plan is to move our financial management and human resource solution from on-premises to be hosted in the cloud. This step will improve availability and security of this application while giving us the opportunity to easily add future enhancements to streamline our processes.

Automation to increase efficiency, enhance service delivery and reduction of costs continues to be one of our biggest focus areas. To illustrate, the following are some of the targeted areas of improvements in 2022:

Sheriff / Jail - Project to replace interview room, squad, and body cameras. The new equipment provides improved efficiencies over the old system
Virtual Fax - Switching over traditional fax lines/machine to virtual fax service that allows faxes to be managed via computer/email and a reduction in telco costs.

Human Services – Work with Human Services to setup appointment scheduling within Avatar to decrease no-shows, add reminders, and streamline data entry for patient documentation and service collection. Automate processes to auto alert users when tasks are due in order to increase compliance and reduce audit risks. Automate verification process for Medicaid status checks with Forward Health to reduce Health Services fiscal staff time. Enhance clinic processes to complete documentation more efficiently for group therapy sessions.

Planning and Development - Archiving paper land records electronically for quicker lookup and potential future data analysis.

Juvenile Detention – Install a data collection solution to reduce workload for nightly bed checks.

Ascent – Developed in-house reporting tool for Ascent land records system. Integration with electronic document repository and Ascent to provide greater search capability, data retrieval, and future document portability.

SharePoint - Creating efficiencies for file sharing and allowing direct end user management of cross- and inter-department communication.

Automation - Implementation of streaming capabilities for county board meetings, allowing us to move on from outsourced service, reduce costs and add capabilities.

Network - Install fiber route to the Airport Tower to create a redundant path to the datacenter.

In conclusion, IS will continue to support and enhance our existing applications and infrastructure while looking for cost effective opportunities to implement new technology solutions, enabling county staff to be more efficient and effective.