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### **Next Steps in the Next Generation State Network Project**

With a recent bid award to a vendor to provide access service connections in the last remaining territory to the new core Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) network, DIS teams continue work to implement the Next Generation State Network. The state awarded the most recent bid for network connectivity to CenturyLink for most of the company's incumbent territory. The goals of the

network project include significantly reducing the complexity of the core network, increased reliability, cost effectiveness, and improved performance.

There are several next steps for the network project. DIS teams are finalizing provisional rates for connectivity to the new network through each of the four vendors providing connectivity, including AT&T, CenturyLink, Cox Communications, and Windstream. DIS leadership will then begin the process to obtain approval and publish the rates. Customer account managers will soon begin meeting with customers to discuss needs and the new rate options for network services.

DIS teams are also working to finalize the co-location for the central office, or merge point, outside of the State Data Center for all vendors providing access to the new network. DIS is currently working with the vendor on a contract agreement and procuring equipment for the location.

The network team will soon begin work with vendors on the rollout of the new network. In order for the rollout to be more cost efficient, DIS will coordinate with vendors to install new routers and disconnect old equipment at local customer sites where feasible. This will minimize travel costs for network technicians, as well as preventing overlapping service costs through the old and new routers.

Project team members will soon contact customers, and customer cooperation will be key to ensure a smooth deployment of the new network. Network technicians will need information such as router and circuit location environmental, power and connectivity logistics to the router area, and cabling from the core network end point site to the router, etc.

DIS will disseminate more frequent information to customers regarding the implementation of the Next Generation State Network. Please watch your inbox for more. If you have any questions regarding the new network project, please contact your customer account manager.

### **Dates for State Video Network Upgrade Set**

DIS teams are eagerly making preparations for the upcoming state video network upgrade and executing efforts to provide customers with the smoothest network cutover possible. The core network equipment is installed, and technicians are conducting tests and making any adjustments needed to the equipment. Network vendors are adding circuits and virtual circuits for the cutover. The state is converting H.320 sites to H.323 sites for the new network.



The target date for the cutover to the newly upgraded video network is the week of March 17 - 25, which is spring break for the majority of customers. DIS network team members will coordinate important information with customers in advance of the cutover. The entire network must be cutover at once instead of separate sites being upgraded individually.

The new state video network will retain current features and will offer customers many enhancements. The new network will initially offer enhanced scheduling, improved security and off-net call connectivity with limited digital conference recording capabilities. In the very near future support for desktop video conferencing, and mobile video conferencing will be added.

There are approximately 550 sites currently on the state video network. More than 30,000 conference hours are scheduled per month during the school year. If you have any questions regarding the state video network upgrade project, please contact Max Kolstad at [max.kolstad@arkansas.gov](mailto:max.kolstad@arkansas.gov) or 501.537.9111.

### **COMPASS Dashboard Released to More Customers**

DIS teams continue to release access to the Centralized Operational Monitoring and Performance Analysis Support System (COMPASS) to our customers. Seven agencies were recently added to the list of agencies with access to the digital dashboard. The COMPASS team is working to ensure a smooth deployment of the dashboard to all customers through efforts to affirm security, user authentication, and data quality. The remainder of our customers should have access through the coming months.

With recent enhancements to Service Desk, the incident management system used by DIS, customers with access to the dashboard will soon notice an addition to COMPASS. Under the incident management area, there will be a tab for resolved tickets, as well as open tickets. The resolved tab will display both closed and resolved

customer incidents. The COMPASS team is currently completing the development of the service order dashboard which will be available in the near future.

The COMPASS team continues work to add access for Arkansas school districts to the dashboard. The team is procuring a multi-authentication license key that will allow schools to log in to view district information. The target is to provide access to schools by the end of the school year. Once schools are given access, the COMPASS and Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) teams will work together to provide training for school technology coordinators.

DIS began the COMPASS project in August 2010 to provide customer agencies a centralized dashboard for viewing and analyzing the operational status, performance, and financial information related to DIS-provided services. If you have any questions regarding the COMPASS project, please contact Carder Hawkins at [carder.hawkins@arkansas.gov](mailto:carder.hawkins@arkansas.gov) or your customer account manager.

### **Upgrade to SharePoint 2010**

A project is underway at DIS to upgrade the current Microsoft SharePoint environment to SharePoint 2010. DIS currently operates on the SharePoint 2007 platform. In order to utilize more efficient features and remain up-to-date, DIS teams identified a need to migrate to the new SharePoint 2010 platform.



SharePoint 2010 will provide customers with a more robust, dynamic, and secure environment. The new version of the platform provides enhancements in mobile connectivity, connections to line of business data, search functions and content management, business intelligence, records management, and more. At this time, DIS teams have completed building the new test environment, and the architecture development for production is underway. Project team members have begun test migrations for the current SharePoint customers, which will allow us to provide customers with the smoothest transition possible to the new SharePoint 2010 environment. DIS teams are also currently working through the rate review process.

Current SharePoint customers should note that SharePoint 2010 performs at its peak in collaboration with Microsoft Office Suite 2010. We strongly encourage our current customers to upgrade to Office 2010, if you haven't already, to receive all of the benefits that SharePoint 2010 has to offer.

If you are a current customer and have questions regarding the SharePoint upgrade, or you are interested in procuring SharePoint services, please contact your customer account manager.

### **DIS Leadership Considers Customer Satisfaction and Feedback**

DIS teams have worked with customers through the past few months to acquire information and feedback for use in the agency's upcoming strategic planning session.



Agency strategic planning takes place each biennium in conjunction with the legislative budgeting session.

In November 2011, customers were asked to participate in an annual customer satisfaction survey. Some service areas had improved results in customer satisfaction, including hosting, network, and voice services. According to the survey, overall customer satisfaction was virtually unchanged from 2010, with only a slight drop, while customer loyalty

results were improved.

Customer satisfaction survey results are being analyzed and used in agency strategic planning to develop strategies to continually improve service to our customers. DIS also recently held two customer focus groups conducted by an outside facilitator. The group sessions were an hour and a half each and were held at the Arkansas State Library. A total of 22 customers participated in the focus groups.

The group facilitator conducted a question and discussion time with the participants. They covered topics such as technology issues that agencies are facing and changes in business that are expected in the near future. Feedback from the two customer focus groups will also be used for our agency strategic planning so that we can match what DIS does to our customers' needs.

Thank you to each of you that participated in the recent customer focus groups as well as the 2011 customer satisfaction survey. We appreciate your feedback, which will help us to reach our vision of customer satisfaction every time.

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