



Pictured from left Vance Gregory, Fort Smith School District technology coordinator, Doug Pallette, Cisco, Mark Myers, DIS director, Angela Rhodes, Cisco, Johnny Key, ADE commissioner and Benny Gooden, Fort Smith School District superintendent



#### IT Procurement Review Process Updates

DIS recently implemented a process to review and provide recommendations regarding state information technology (IT) procurement requests over \$100,000 including requests to purchase software, hardware, maintenance, staff augmentation, subscriptions and renewals. Multiyear contracts that reach the \$100,000 threshold at any point throughout subsequent contract years also should be submitted for review.

The DIS procurement review work group is currently using the Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System (AASIS) to track the procurement requests and all information related to the request. The Information Network of Arkansas (INA) is in the process of developing an application for those agencies that must submit IT procurement requests but do not have AASIS. The application will capture required information for the approval process.

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) Office of Intergovernmental Services is now a part of the review process as well and is notified through AASIS to review IT procurement requests ensuring that the request aligns with the agency's technology plan. Legislative review will also begin Aug. 1, 2015, as Act 557 goes into effect.

#### Connections to Improved APSCN Kick-off

DIS and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) leadership were in Fort Smith Wednesday, July 15, for an event to connect the first school district to the improved Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN).

During the event, Mark Myers, DIS director, Johnny Key, ADE commissioner and Benny Gooden, Fort Smith School District superintendent presented background and remarks regarding the project to improve APSCN to provide 200Kbps per user and increase bandwidth speeds by 40 times.

Following the groundbreaking event and the first successful connection an improved APSCN, the DIS network team is in the process of working with vendors to outline the next steps to connect more Arkansas schools to the upgraded network. Currently, the network team is prioritizing a list of 25 schools that will connect to the improved network, and vendors are providing the tentative dates to migrate those schools. The procurement of needed equipment for the schools to connect to the upgraded network is also underway.

The project to connect school districts across the state to the improved APSCN is a two-year project and is scheduled to be complete July 2017. If you would like to review the presentation that was made at the Fort Smith School District, please click on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfRCeK7Z31g>.



#### VoIP Now Standard for Voice Services

DIS hosts a statewide Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network that is readily available to any state agency, board or commission on the state data network. VoIP has become the standard in voice services, and DIS strives to provide customers with the latest technology to meet business needs for unified communications.

The VoIP service provided by DIS includes IP telephony, voice mail, instant messaging, and video conferencing, as well as options from basic to enhanced services with video capabilities.

Donnie Matthews, senior customer account manager, has a blog post at <http://blog.dis.arkansas.gov> that provides some valuable information about making the switch to VoIP services. To learn more about the features and benefits of the VoIP services provided by DIS, please click on <http://www.dis.arkansas.gov/products/Services/Voice/Pages/VoiceoverIP.aspx> or email [dis.customer.service@arkansas.gov](mailto:dis.customer.service@arkansas.gov).

#### Project to Improve State Data Center Cooling Complete

The extensive project to improve the cooling system and increase energy efficiency in the state data center in the multiagency complex (MAC) was marked complete Friday, July 17.

Prior to the kickoff of the cooling upgrade, there were significant improvements that needed to be made in the state data center to increase reliability, provide a higher level of redundancy and ensure seamless operations. The improvements that were required in the facility included a complete overhaul of the piping system that provides chilled water to cool the data center; new equipment to ensure redundancy and supplemental cooling including a new 140 nominal ton chiller and numerous self-contained row-based data center cooling units; a more efficient equipment layout on the data center floor; installation of an overhead cable tray system to improve cable organization in the data center; and the removal of unused cables under the data center floor to increase air flow to equipment housed in the data center. The DIS operations team in partnership with the Arkansas Building Authority (ABA) and contractors have completed all of these requirements.

With the completion of the cooling upgrade project, the DIS operations team will now focus on measuring and tracking energy usage in the state data center to verify the amount of energy reduction. The improvements made to the cooling system are expected to increase energy efficiency in the state data center by a projected 15 percent. DIS began the cooling upgrade project in July 2014.



#### Customer Account Managers on Standby to Assist

Often it is stated "please contact your customer account manager." In return, you might ask "What is a customer account manager?" or "Who is my customer account manager?"

DIS employs four full-time customer account managers to work closely with customers on a daily basis to assist in meeting the technology needs of state entities. Each customer account manager is assigned a number of customers and acts as a liaison between numerous DIS work groups and the customer to assist in acquiring new services, upgrading current services, resolving issues with DIS provided services, and much more.

If you need assistance in contacting your assigned customer account manager, please click on <http://www.dis.arkansas.gov/support/Pages/Support/FindCustomerAccountRep.aspx> or contact the customer accounts team at [dis.customer.service@arkansas.gov](mailto:dis.customer.service@arkansas.gov).



#### Cybersecurity Mashup Video Posted

The DIS communications team produced a mashup video focused on cybersecurity to kickoff director Mark Myer's presentation at the recent Hot Springs Technology Institute (HSTI).

The video provides some great information regarding the state network and the work DIS is doing on a daily basis to protect the network. Please take a few minutes to watch the video on the DIS YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdFPzQyUx0&feature=youtu.be>.



#### Meet the New DIS CFO

Karen Fricke began in April as the DIS chief financial officer (CFO) to continue her years of service to the state of Arkansas.

Before accepting the CFO position, Fricke was employed at the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) where she served more than 12 years in multiple capacities including assistant to the CFO,

divisional CFO and agency CFO. Fricke worked for the Arkansas Public Service Commission, North Little Rock Electric, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and Disability Determination for Social Security Administration (DDSA) prior to her employment at DHS.

Fricke is a Little Rock native and graduated from Hall High School. She went on to obtain a bachelor's degree in economics from Southwestern at Memphis, which is now Rhodes College. She began working after graduation and earned a master's in business administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) through night classes. Fricke also completed nine additional hours in accounting to gain knowledge of recent changes in accounting practices.

Fricke has three grown children: Gaines, Elizabeth and Wilson, and a granddaughter, Caroline that is almost 2 years old. When she is not at work, Fricke enjoys fishing and yard-work. She also plays bridge once a month with the same group of women that she has played with for 25 years. She is a dedicated subscriber to the Arkansas Democrat Gazette and sincerely enjoys the Sudoku and crossword puzzles.

#### DIS General Counsel Attends Harvard Training Program

DIS General Counsel Anthony Black recently participated in a Harvard Law School program focused on contract negotiations and equipping attendees with skills to maximize their positions at the bargaining table and in turn generate the best deals on behalf of their organizations. The



Harvard Negotiation Institute (HNI) was conducted in June and consisted of lectures, facilitated discussions, skills-based exercises, negotiation simulations and personalized coaching sessions.

Black was among approximately 80 attendees including lawyers, judges, leaders of nongovernmental organizations, executives and other international professionals. A group negotiation exercise on the first day learned Black with another attorney from the U.S., an attorney from Mexico and two other professional counterparts from France and Switzerland.

Black said he intends to leverage the skills he gained at the HNI seminar to create a more level playing field in contract negotiations with the approximately 450 vendors doing business with DIS. "We work with some very sophisticated vendors with an international footprint," Black said. "I want to help make sure the terms of the contracts being negotiated are as favorable to the state as possible."

With DIS responsible for oversight of IT contracts of \$100,000 or more, Black said it was important to learn the core concepts of formal negotiation approaches and how to use them to strengthen DIS' and the state's position to reach a successful outcome that achieves the desired goals in a manner fair to all parties. In the near future Black hopes to share some key best practices with DIS employees who also play a critical role in contract negotiations.

HNI is affiliated with Harvard's Program on Negotiation (PON), a university consortium dedicated to developing the theory and practice of negotiation and dispute resolution. PON was founded in 1983 as a special research project at Harvard Law School. PON includes faculty, students and staff from Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Tufts University.