

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Technology Initiatives

USING TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT GEORGIANS WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT

Governor Barnes envisions making state government function like a successful business, with an external focus on its customers (citizens and businesses) instead of an internal focus on rules and procedures. Georgia stands at the threshold of a new day when technology can be a powerful tool in public life as well as in homes, businesses and schools. The Georgia Technology Authority created during the 1999 Regular Session is spearheading these sweeping changes to create new commercial opportunities throughout the state, connect citizens with government services, and provide educators, law enforcement and other state workers with the tools they need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.

CREATING A PORTAL TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Georgians' needs are at the center of the state's plans to create a portal, a new electronic door to government information and services. When it is completed over the next several years, the portal will simplify and streamline the way Georgians do business with state government. People and businesses using the portal will have online access to the government information they want 24 hours a day, with the assurance that their privacy is protected. Online services, such as drivers' license renewal and vehicle registration, will enable Georgians to complete many transactions faster and more conveniently.

The portal also will mean "no wrong door" to government information, presenting information organized around the public's needs, not just agency boundaries. For example, for someone looking for information about starting a new business, finding employment leads or locating services for an elderly relative, the portal will collect information from several different agencies and present it in one place.

As more transactions move online, it becomes even more important that the state be a trusted and secure custodian of citizens' private information and a secure operator of automated transmissions. GTA is coordinating

development of a privacy policy for all government information. Information will be classified by level of privacy, ranging from confidential to public. Agencies will determine how their own information should be classified.

The Governor is recommending for the Amended FY 2002 Budget \$8.7 million to develop the portal for nine systems in the Department of Human Resources: Child Support Enforcement, Eligibility, Child Care, Vital Records, Aging, Immunization, Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse, Women Infants and Children and Child Welfare. These funds will be matched with federal funds at 50%. Additionally, the new Department of Motor Vehicle Safety will also be a part of the first phase. For both agencies, the Governor recommended additional funding for upgrading computer software.

MODERNIZING THE DATA CENTER

GTA is developing a security plan for state government, which includes preparing for disaster recovery and business continuity and safeguarding state information systems. One aspect is the physical security of the state's networks and computers. Further, the data center provides support for more than 125 state systems, including personnel, payroll, purchasing, invoice payments, billing and revenue collections for 76 agencies. It also operates systems that track child support payments, determine eligibility for various health and human services benefits and issue drivers' licenses.

Built more than 30 years ago, the data center is outdated and not as productive as judged by private sector standards. The state needs an up-to-date, secure data center able to safely house network-based computers to operate the thousands of applications that support state agency services. In addition to enhanced security, this arrangement also is expected to offer substantial operational savings for taxpayers.

To address this issue, the Governor is recommending \$18 million in bonds in the Amended FY2002 Budget to purchase a facility to relocate the main data center to a more secure, modern environment.