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BioTown, USA is Model Energy Program

By Mikel Chavers

Nearly an hour and a half outside of Indianapolis, in the small, rural Indiana town of Reynolds, 150 of the town's families drive flex-fuel vehicles, and residents can fill their cars with biodiesel and E85 fuel at the local BP station. Construction is also underway for a special facility that will turn waste—such as cow and hog manure—into energy.

Reynolds has become BioTown, USA, the nation's first model community that will run completely off biorenewable energy sources, becoming self-sustaining and environmentally friendly. BioTown is a winner of one of eight CSG Innovations Awards.

"Many states have shown great interest in BioTown—all curious to see the end results of the project," said Indiana Lt. Gov.

Becky Skillman. "BioTown is only successful if it can be duplicated."

With that in mind, the second phase of the model project is already in the works. In March, ground was officially broken for the Technology Suite, a special facility that will take municipal waste such as corn stover, manure and other types of biomass and turn them into electricity, thermal energy, biodiesel and fertilizer.

The facility will contain a gasifier and an anaerobic digester. Brandon Seitz, program manager of the Energy Division of the Indiana Office of Energy and Defense Development, said the digester portion is actually pretty common and the process will basically run the waste products—usually manure—through the digester where methane gasses are let off. Methane gasses are usable as heat and electricity, he said.

In essence, the energy made from the waste will be used in Reynolds' lights, Seitz said.

What's left over after that process is a kind of organic solid that can be used for such things as bedding for farmers' cattle. The best part: "It doesn't smell," Seitz said.

Energy Systems Group based in Evansville, Ind., is partnering with the BioTown project to develop the special technology facility. That partnership was more than two years in the making, said Seitz, who heads the BioTown project.

Finding the right partner on the technology suite was just one challenge for Biotown. Once the facility is up and running, transportation of the waste to the facility is a huge issue, he said. Farmers close by are willing to bring their waste to the facility using tanks, while at least

one farmer is exploring the idea of using a pipeline to transport waste to the facility.

With more than 150,000 hogs within a 15-mile radius of Reynolds, all that waste is important. By 2008, the BioTown Technology Suite will provide all the electricity for the town, and any excess electricity will be sold to the local electric utility, giving Reynolds some economic advantages, Seitz said.

"This kind of gives a new avenue for something else to use the waste for," he said.

For the town's nearly 550 residents, being a part of a project that uses homegrown renewable resources means they'll soon be independent from foreign energy sources and they will get to use cutting edge technology in their day-to-day lives.

"It's very rewarding to see this community embrace these new ideas," Skillman said. "Reynolds has the highest number of users per capita of flex fuel in the world, I'm sure," she added, taking into account the small size of the town. In November 2005, as a part of the first phase of the project, 20 residents received free General Motors flex fuel vehicles for two years. Others have since purchased their own.

BioTown traces its roots to 2005 when the Indiana Department of Agriculture rolled out a strategic plan that included bioenergy. The biggest initiative in that arena was the BioTown project, and it since has developed into Indiana's own teaching tool.

"It's not just about taking waste and making energy," Seitz said. "We want to make this an educational destination; we want to teach people around the country about bioenergy."

Fast Facts

- An ongoing exhibit about BioTown at the Indiana State Museum cost \$31,047.
- BioTown's Technology Suite uses an anaerobic digester, a gasifier and fast pyrolysis to turn waste into energy.
- Indiana officials estimate the technology facility in BioTown will generate electricity by fall 2007 and will be fully operational by 2008.
- In September 2007, BioTown representatives traveled to Germany's BioVillage in the town of Juehnde. The town of nearly 750 residents is the first in Germany to produce all of its heat and electricity from bioenergy.



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North Dakota Closes Loophole with PRIDE

By Mikel Chavers

It stemmed from sheer frustration. In North Dakota, officials were downright frustrated with the lack of options available to deal with parents who do not pay their child support. Many of those parents become chronic nonpayers because they either can't—or won't—get a job.

It seemed the district courts were dealing with the same problem over and over. A nonpaying parent would tell the judge he or she couldn't get a job, and the judge would direct them to Job Service North Dakota, the state's Workforce Investment Act Agency, for help.

But too many times, left alone, the parent would fall through the cracks in the system. Child support remained unpaid and the parent still didn't have a job.

"You would have the same people coming back again and again," said District Judge Allan Schmalenberger of North Dakota's southwest judicial district. "I just can't find any jobs," they said."

Without a means to pay child support, many delinquent payers were being held in contempt of court. When this happens, they are usually sent to jail until they make a payment, said Mike Schwindt, director of the state's Child Support Enforcement Division.

But there had to be a better way, he thought.

"What we're trying to do is not put them in jail; what we really want to do is get people back to taking care of their kids," Schwindt said.

That's where the new program, the Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (nicknamed PRIDE), comes in. The program, a winner of one of CSG's Innovations Awards, closes the loophole between the judge and existing social services, connecting employment help services to parents who

aren't paying their child support.

Once the program started in April 2005, a PRIDE coordinator could meet with parents immediately after a hearing and provide the help necessary to find and retain employment.

The project blends case management skills, job skills improvement services, job placement services and supportive services to help a noncustodial parent obtain or improve employment so he or she is able to make child support payments.

"It has made a world of difference to us," Schmalenberger said. He estimates that since its inception, the program has cut the number of return offenders to court in half.

PRIDE coordinators were finding that some of the chronic nonpayers weren't making child support payments because they were underemployed or unemployed due to a disability, a mental health issue or a substance abuse issue.

Under the PRIDE program, these parents are connected to services that already exist under the state's Health and Human Services division, such as substance abuse counseling.

In that realm, Schwindt tells of a mother and father who were addicted to methamphetamines. Their children were in foster care and an order was issued against each parent to pay child support.

In that case, the parents were sent to addiction treatment through PRIDE and were able to kick the habit, Schwindt said, adding that the two were able to find and retain jobs with the help of human services and job services.

But PRIDE is not just about counseling.

More than the services offered, PRIDE seeks to help parents overcome obstacles. Through January, PRIDE spent nearly \$26,000 on aid such as car repairs, day

care, work clothes, transportation, licenses and other tools meant to help parents look for and obtain a job.

"You didn't have one piece working in one direction and another working in another direction," Schwindt said. All of the relative issues were addressed and tracked with PRIDE, he said, and the program illustrates multiple branches of government working together.

The project started first in pilot programs in southwest and northeast North Dakota. So far 74 percent of participating parents have obtained employment, taking on average just short of two months to find a job.

The PRIDE program is funded by state grants approved by the North Dakota legislature, and this year, the aim is to expand PRIDE to all parts of the state.

Fast Facts

- The estimated cost to expand the PRIDE program statewide is \$555,000 annually, funding the salaries and operating costs for seven and a half positions.
- With PRIDE, the average monthly child support payment increased more than 88 percent.
- Under the program, there was an 18.5 percent decrease in the rate of nonpayment of child support.
- Public assistance benefits to support the parents or parents' dependents decreased \$123,490 per case in the six months following referral to PRIDE.



Courtesy of Western Carolina University

North Carolina Aims to Cut Energy Usage

By Mikel Chavers

From simply turning off the lights and negotiating utility rates to tuning up digital thermostat controls and hosting energy-saving competitions among participants, North Carolina aims to cut energy usage in state buildings at least 20 percent by 2008.

In fact, just by performing corrective and preventive maintenance procedures like tuning up HVAC systems, the state is expected to save more than \$700,000 this year alone.

And in a state where energy spending has seen a 33 percent increase each year for the last three years, state officials are eager to reduce—or at least stabilize—the more than \$300 million spent on energy and water utilities a year for public facilities.

Fast Facts

- In July 2002, North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley urged state agencies and public universities to promote energy conservation and save on utility bills.
- The Utility Savings Initiative for State Facilities began in 2002 with start-up costs of \$507,650, and current operating cost are now \$1.04 million for fiscal year 2006–2007—contributing to combined avoided energy costs of nearly \$63 million since 2002.
- The state's energy office holds an annual 14-day Energy Management Diploma series at North Carolina State University to train energy liaisons and facilities managers.
- To date, nearly \$45 million has been identified for performance contracting, where energy savings will be used to pay off major capital projects.

Energy consumption is a real issue for states, said Larry Shirley, director of the state energy office. “They’ve got to get a tourniquet and stabilize it,” he said.

That tourniquet has taken the form of a special program used to help reduce energy consumption in state buildings and other facilities, so the state government can lead in the environmentally friendly effort by example. The program, **Utility Savings Initiative for State Facilities**, is a winner of one of CSG’s Innovations Awards.

A central aim of the program is to get state agencies and public universities to reduce the amount of energy they use by 20 percent over five years, averaging 4 percent a year. Last year, 66 state agencies, community colleges, public universities and affiliates participated in the effort. The state has saved more than \$62 million in utility costs since the program’s inception.

Take the 9,000-student Western Carolina University in the small town of Cullowhee, N.C., for example. The university has reduced energy consumption by at least 30 percent since the 2002–2003 fiscal year when the statewide program began, said Lauren Bishop, energy manager at the school.

Bishop acts as a leader for a “conservation awareness team” in the program. In that position, she is charged with getting students and faculty excited about saving energy.

“A lot of times folks like to look at the bottom line,” Bishop said. “But I like to bring in the educational component.”

There’s been so much education and activity from these conservation awareness teams that the initiative’s manager, Len Hoey, has taken to calling them conservation action teams instead.

The action has since spread beyond state colleges, universities and community colleges to reach the K–12 public schools.

The Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools saved more than \$1 million per year in tune-ups and other measures for the last two years, Shirley said. The school system used simple maintenance procedures to make sure the digital systems controlling the HVACs were working correctly, what Shirley calls a “quick payback item.”

Those kinds of measures, he said, required an investment of about \$1,000 per building, but resulted in much larger energy savings.

The program also provides an innovative way to fund large capital improvement projects for state agencies. Using the concept of performance contracting, the energy savings realized are used to pay off major renovations and other capital improvements. In recent years such performance contracting wasn’t allowed in light of a tighter budget situation, Shirley said.

The Museum of Art in Raleigh was the first project to use the new performance contracting, he said. That project added new equipment to maintain the comfort and humidity levels of the building, saving the museum 54 percent on its energy bill and costing about \$5 million for the improvements, Shirley said.

In fact, the program as a whole has been so successful that this year North Carolina’s legislature voted to extend its standards. With the passage of Senate Bill 668, the goal is for all state buildings to reduce energy use 20 percent by 2010 and 30 percent by 2015.

“And this is because the program has been successful,” Shirley said. “It took our program and codified it.”



Courtesy of Western Carolina University



Courtesy of Virginia Division of Child Support Enforcement



Cell Phone Records Help Virginia Child Support Efforts

By Mikel Chavers

At any one time Nick Young, deputy commissioner and director of Child Support Enforcement in Virginia, is looking for some 125,000 to 140,000 people who have not paid their child support in the state. More than \$2.4 billion in unpaid child support is now owed—the cumulative total since 1975.

And the situation isn't getting any better.

The caseload increases steadily each year as traditional methods of punishing delinquent payers fail and as some continue to elude authorities. Young and his department are trying to reverse that downward trend. They're now tracking delinquent payers using cell phone records.

Seventy-five percent of Americans have cell phones, Young said, and that's what makes the state's program beneficial.

"It just became so obvious walking down the street," said Cindy Coiner, policy specialist for the department. Seemingly everyone—including those the department is looking for—has a cell phone, Coiner said.

The **Division of Child Support Enforcement Cell Phone Records Initiative**, operational in June 2005, works with the six largest cell phone carriers in Virginia to obtain billing addresses and cell phone numbers for parents who are delinquent in paying child support. The program is one of eight CSG Innovations Award winners.

Since 2005, more than 375 delinquent parents have been located and are now paying child support as a result of cell phone records subpoenaed by Young's department. Last year, Virginia collected \$608 million in child support (some delinquent), a nearly 4 percent increase over the \$585 million in child support collected the previous year.

"We're getting better at collecting it, but the problem is not necessarily going away," Young said.

But there's no question obtaining cell phone records on delinquent payers is another powerful tool Virginia's child support enforcement services has in its arsenal.

Take the case of one man living in a small, rural Virginia community who had not paid child support for his now 10-year-old son for five years. The man was enjoying the Fourth of July with his second family (not the mother and child owed support) when a sheriff served him with a warrant and took him into custody, Young said.

After the man sat in jail for two weeks, his second family paid a portion of the child support money owed—some \$4,000—to get him out of jail.

"That was all because we had his cell phone number," Young said. And that cell phone number was associated with a billing address.

Before that success story, however, the program got off to a somewhat rocky start when the idea was hatched in 2004. At the time, Young was working with the Federal Communications Commission and a few cell phone companies. The idea didn't come to fruition right away as the Division of Child Support Enforcement got a lot of pushback, Young said.

"A lot of people are skeptical of big government," Young said.

He said officials knew they had subpoena authority, but child support enforcement hadn't used it before with cell phone records.

As a combined effort between the Attorney General's office and the Division of Child Support Enforcement, the project first simply tried to obtain voluntary participation from cell phone companies to get records on some of their customers. But when attempts were unproductive, the program turned to mandatory subpoenas, Young said.

"You had to have the right documents; you had to talk to (the cell phone companies) in the right way," Young said. "They need to be able to turn to their customers and say they had no choice."

Now, 12 to 15 states have implemented the program and some are doing data matching, according to Young. He's also co-chair of the National Cell Phone Work Group formed by the federal child support enforcement office to make the program more widespread. The work group has 10 member states.

"Some states are going to have to have laws passed, and some states will have legislators that are more reluctant," Young said of the transferability of the program. As for Virginia, Young finds that the numbers on how many noncustodial parents don't pay their child support speak for themselves.

"We're here to enforce the law and make parents accountable to their kids," he said.

Fast Facts

- To date, 4,730 manual subpoenas that were physically signed individually have been generated for 840 noncustodial parents owing child support.
- A recent data match with Verizon turned up information associated with 17,233 noncustodial parents, including 30,714 reported cell phone numbers.
- Instead of using manual subpoenas, Virginia is beginning to electronically transmit inquiry files with some 250,000 names to cell phone companies for data matching.



Arizona Health-e Connection Increases Efficiency, Quality

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

Two tenets are driving the U.S. health care discussion: efficiency and quality of care.

“We have the potential to create efficiencies within health care,” said Chris Cummiskey, Arizona’s chief information officer. “We know the growth of health care spending has outpaced inflation year after year. Can we make the system more efficient? Can we use technology to improve the quality of care for citizens who are seeking health care assistance?”

Arizona is answering those questions with its **Health-e Connection**, one of eight winners of CSG Innovations Awards.

“The goal is to provide better information to the consumers in a way that can assist them in managing their contacts with hospitals, physicians’ offices, labs and other points in the health profession,” said Cummiskey, “and have one place to keep this information organized in a fashion helpful to a physician.”

Cummiskey said the state also wanted to drive as much efficiency in the health care system as possible so the overall growth in inflation could be controlled. The challenge, it seemed, was to become more efficient in the way services were provided using technology, he said.

To that end, Gov. Janet Napolitano in 2005 convened a steering committee of public and private health care stakeholders to determine a strategy to develop a state-wide electronic health data exchange. The committee spent about nine months developing a roadmap for a health information infrastructure across Arizona.

A primary ingredient of the roadmap was the development of a nonprofit board of directors to advance health information technology and health information exchange throughout the state. Arizona has received guidance from e-health initiatives in Washington, D.C.

“Fortunately for our situation, Arizona is out in front of the curve in terms of developing this e-health approach,” Cummiskey said.

He said a successful e-health program requires buy-in from many different stakeholders, including the many smaller physician offices in Arizona with five physicians or less.

“How do you incentivize technology at the physician level?” he said. “You’ve got a real challenge in how do we get doctors’ offices who are dealing with mountains of paper to work with emergent technology.”

In addition, Cummiskey said the health information infrastructure accessible to hospitals, physicians, labs and clinics needs to be planned. “If you’re serious about moving that information, you’ve got to have the infrastructure to do it,” he said.

The state is encouraging regional health information organizations at the local level, such as one established in southern Arizona, based in Tucson. These regional organizations, Cummiskey said, will be responsible for developing health information technology at the physician level, and an exchange process that connects communities and medical data.

Cummiskey said the program plans to develop a system in which individuals own, and have access to, their medical information. The data would be a compendium of their medical histories and medications used becoming “a summary of their health experience throughout their lives that can be controlled by the individual patient,” he said.

The goal is to establish the infrastructure and have electronic medical records for every Arizonian by 2010. The state recently received a Medicaid transformation grant, which will provide \$12 million to establish electronic medical records for the Medicaid population in Arizona. Cummiskey said the finance model for other Arizona patients is still unclear at this point.

The state faces many challenges in moving the information. Arizona Health-e Connection must sort out how the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements and state and local rules and policies affect the exchange of health information, Cummiskey said.

He said the state received a grant from the National Governors Association to develop a template to work through privacy issues and ensure the information is secure. Cummiskey said the state hopes to have those templates available in December, not only for Arizona’s program but for use by other states as well.

Management of the program has transitioned to the nonprofit organization, and Arizona’s Health-e Connection recently selected Brad Tritle as the organization’s first executive director.

“We are working at the nonprofit to make sure we are aligning our strategies, that over the next 12 months we have good standards in place (and) have good guidance as to what we can expect from the state perspective,” Cummiskey said.

Fast Facts

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates the use of health information technology could save the U.S. \$140 billion per year in health care costs.
- Arizona Health-e Connection could result in \$2.6 billion in annual savings in state health care costs.



Courtesy of the Washington GMAP program

GMAP Program Keeps Washington Government Accountable

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire is focused on results.

That's one reason she implemented the **Government Management Accountability and Performance** program, one of eight winners of CSG Innovations Awards. The program is a disciplined method of performance review that leaders can use to make decisions and achieve results.

"She personally reviews performance results from directors and holds those directors accountable," Larisa Benson, director of the GMAP program, said of Gregoire. "We focus on making our data timely and accurate. Meetings are real-time, problem-solving sessions."

The state agencies involved in GMAP meetings develop follow-up plans to help improve services to Washington residents.

"It's a change in the culture of state government from a focus on the processes to a focus on results," Benson said. "If a leader does it, it must be important. Every time (Gregoire) is in there, she reiterates that we are focused on results important to citizens. It's a balance between policy and management efforts."

GMAP meetings are focused on a specific topic and include every agency that has some impact on that subject. The topic areas covered in GMAP sessions are health care, vulnerable children, economic vitality, Puget Sound clean-up, government efficiency, public safety, transportation, Workfirst, a program designed to help low-income families, and education.

"We're not there to blame anybody, but if we have the data on the table and everybody in the room, you can't pass the buck. You have to stay there until you solve the problem," said Benson.

Agency heads can be part of multiple GMAP sessions. For instance, the secretary of the Department of Social and

Health Services participates in four different GMAP sessions each month—for health care, vulnerable children and adults, public safety and juvenile corrections.

Washington has seen some success because of the program, which has been in place since June 2005. The governor released a report highlighting a dozen significant achievements. Among them:

- Response to child abuse reports are faster;
- Error rates on tax returns and food stamps are among the lowest in the country;
- Job placement rates in some unemployment offices have almost doubled; and
- Fewer workplace injuries and claims have led to a reduction in workers compensation premiums.

"Fewer kids are being abused, more people are getting jobs, roads and bridges are built on time and on budget. We're preventing traffic fatalities," Benson said. "I'm not saying we've got it figured out. We've got a long way to go. We have been able to make some significant progress."

"We actually take action based on the results we're getting, which, I think, is why we're getting better results," said Benson. "The most innovative thing we're doing is that we're doing it by results, rather than agency by agency. If (agency employees) know we're going to follow through, they put their best efforts there."

The program is modeled after programs such as CompStat in the New York City Police Department and CitiStat in Baltimore.

"Nobody had done it at the state level or did it by results," said Benson.

"I tell people this is just common sense. It's just good management," she said.

GMAP started out with the governor's top priorities, and then added other policy areas as the GMAP staff expanded. The education initiative was launched in September. "That's a tough one," Benson said, "because we have a fractured accountability environment there."

GMAP continues to expand in policy areas, and is automating the reporting process to allow agencies more time for development. The program is also continuing efforts to deepen the use of GMAP principles in agencies. According to the Innovations Awards application, Washington agencies now hold internal GMAP sessions to improve accountability.

Benson offers this advice to other states considering a similar program:

"Start with what you have," she said. "Don't wait for the perfect measure. You'll never find the perfect measure. The best way to get better measures is to start using the ones you have. People will tone up the measures."

"The second thing is to take the time to understand the operating theory behind your programs. Start with why you're doing that program and how you know whether it works or not."

Fast Facts

- GMAP reports have three primary types of information: data, analysis and action plans.
- Agencies have implemented GMAP principles internally to drive accountability throughout their organizations.
- The governor's GMAP forums have expanded the number of policy areas from the original six to nine.



Pilot Program Helps Connecticut's Homeless

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

Homelessness is often a proxy for a host of other problems.

"The people that wind up homeless are typically people who have a bunch of other problems," said Patrick Hynes, director of Offender Programs and Victims Services for the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

If they have cycled in and out of jails or prisons, making connections that will eliminate the recurring path to homelessness is often difficult.

That's where Connecticut's **Supportive Housing Pilot Program** comes in. The program is one of eight national winners of CSG Innovations Awards.

The program, a collaboration of the state, the nonprofit Community Renewal Team and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, seeks to address the revolving door relationship between homelessness and prison. It assists those people cycling through prison and shelters with housing and total wraparound services, including mental health, employment assistance and food vouchers, according to Christopher McCluskey, director of forensic services for CRT.

CRT is a community action agency, which also operates shelters throughout the Hartford region. Clients are assessed for all possible services, including housing, when they come in, according to McCluskey.

"Automatically, in real time, the clinician or case worker can see what this client is eligible for," he said.

McCluskey said many times, clients will not get all the assistance for which they are eligible because they may have to fill out multiple applications.

"They're apprehensive about going and sharing information with multiple people," said McCluskey. But CRT can identify in one interview any part of the human services infrastructure that can benefit clients.

"I think the biggest reason for our success in this program is our staff," said McCluskey. "They're truly committed to these clients. These are individuals who come with multiple issues. The need is so great and there are no other services available that are consistent with what we do in this model."

CRT has worked with landlords and businesses to help place clients in the pilot housing program in apartments and jobs. McCluskey said CRT has developed a database of employers willing to work with clients.

"We're seeing more and more success in getting these clients employed," McCluskey said. "They're addressing the substance abuse, and getting gainful employment they can be proud of."

The Department of Corrections provides funding for apartments, but landlords didn't like the idea of having former inmates lease from them. CRT found it was easier to take on master leases of all its clients in this program, with a goal of eventually turning over the lease to individual clients.

"Once the landlords know our clients and know us, we're in a much better position to have those leases signed over to a client," McCluskey said.

Fifteen participants now live in the CRT-leased apartments, and are working and participating in treatment.

"We're putting them in a spot where they can be successful," McCluskey said. "We get their foot in the door and provide them with the tools to be successful and take it on their own."

And most have been. McCluskey said one of the biggest obstacles for individuals with chronic substance abuse is avoiding relapse. Parolees face strict provisions and responsibilities to the Department of Corrections. Technical violations, in which an individual becomes a user again, are the primary reasons program participants return to prison.

Hynes said the state evaluated the program in September. He believes there will be enough support to expand the program with CRT and replicate it in another city.

"I think it's working because we are wrapping a whole bunch of services around people and are identifying a certain population," said Hynes. "It's designed for a population that has a history of homelessness."

CRT is actively recruiting individuals directly from shelters in the Hartford region to expand the program. McCluskey said changes have been made as the program has progressed, based on research and opinions of participants. For instance, clients in the beginning were placed in congregate facilities instead of scattered site apartments.

"In my personal viewpoint, putting individuals into their own scattered site apartment where there's no stigma attached ... this is individuals being successfully reintegrated into society," McCluskey said.

"We could sit in this room and put together a tremendous program. We could have some brilliant people at the table, but if we don't go to the individuals living it and (ask) what they need ... We need to know what our population is saying they need in order for the program to be successful," he said.

Fast Facts

- Clients give 30 percent of their income to the program to help augment the costs of the apartment.
- Program combines a rent subsidy program with intensive substance abuse recovery and employment services.



Courtesy of the New Jersey State Library



New Jersey Knowledge Initiative Provides Needed Information

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

As New Jersey officials were discussing ways to bring high tech, small startup businesses to the state, talk eventually turned to infrastructure.

“I realized what was missing was an information infrastructure,” said Norma E. Blake, the state librarian. “Owners of small businesses, some researchers and students had to go to either one of our major universities or drive to universities out of state in order to access this timely data (and) very expensive information materials.

“These articles on data clinical trials that are very expensive, and large companies have the money to purchase them, as do large universities,” Blake said. “For smaller entities, it is just out of the price range.”

Some information databases cost as much as \$17,000 or more for a subscription.

Enter the **New Jersey Knowledge Initiative**, in which the state library bought access to databases and provided access at every county college as well as all the four-year colleges and universities. Desktop access was given to 350 businesses working with the Economic Development Authority.

The program is one of eight to be recognized with a CSG Innovations Award.

Blake said university librarians surveyed researchers as well as faculty members in science, medicine, technology and business fields to determine what databases they needed access to. The state library worked with the major business organizations in the state and surveyed their business members to find out what information they needed to run their businesses and get grants successfully.

The state library developed a list of the most highly sought databases.

The state library was able to get \$6 million over a two-year period from state government to develop the program. With that

funding, the state library purchased \$74.5 million worth of access.

“It was a significant savings for everyone, and also gave access to people who never would have had access,” said Blake.

Getting such a discounted rate took some effort.

“We were able to do it because we were able to convince the vendors we were giving them a market they never had before and could never get on their own,” said Blake. “They were never going to get the county colleges to have their products.

“By adding on to the rest of their market and offering this low cost deal, they were able to get additional customers.”

All the businesses with desktop access have 50 or fewer employees, and in many cases are just two people sitting in an office, according to Blake. “This is a market they never would have had,” she said.

Some of those people came from larger corporations and were familiar with the information available on the databases, but couldn’t afford the access.

The investment has paid off, according to Blake.

“It does make a difference to a businessperson where they locate if they can get information,” she said. “It really spurs economic development in the state. It makes New Jersey just a business friendly environment because it pulls together all the business organizations and statewide organizations.

“It’s a way of bringing partners together to benefit business.”

Blake points to a resident of central Jersey who had a small business and wanted to invent an insulin pump.

“In order to do his business, he was having to travel to Rutgers or the University of Delaware,” said Blake. “Some of that information doesn’t appear for free in print

yet. It’s so brand new and you have to pay bucks to get access. He was able to use the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative from his desktop and was able to get a major research grant.”

New Jersey is interested in shared services and the cost-effectiveness of a statewide buy, because the state is home to many scientists and engineers, and considered a leader in scientific innovation, according to Blake.

“It made sense for libraries to do that. Our job as librarians is to guide people to the best sources and to guide them to use them most effectively,” she said.

“We have a new system in our state whereby any student who goes to one of our two-year county colleges will have all their credits accepted when they go to a four-year college,” she said. “It’s very important they know how to use database and resources when they get to the four-year colleges.”

Blake said four other states have expressed interest in replicating the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative. She said it’s important to have the funding and commitment for the program.

Fast Facts

- More than 8 million articles and records were used during the first 18 months of the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative.
- The \$3 million annual operational costs are funded 100 percent by state legislature appropriations.
- The initiative is the only statewide library database access program focused on business and economic development.

Innovations Awards Finalists by Region

eastern

- Connecticut's Supportive Housing Pilot Program
- Delaware's Energy Risk Management Program for the State and Aggregation Partners
- Maine's Air Monitoring Data Service
- Massachusetts' Department of Correct/MassHealth Pilot Program
- Massachusetts' DD Suite (Developmental Disabilities Suite)
- New Jersey's Knowledge Initiative
- New Jersey's Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (New Jersey PLACE)
- New Jersey's Rapid HIV Testing at Publicly Funded Counseling and Testing Sites
- Rhode Island's Marine Septic No Discharge Compliance Program
- Rhode Island's DMV/AAA of Southern New England Partnership
- Vermont's Vermont Votes for Kids

southern

- Georgia's Faster, Friendlier, Easier Service to Georgians —The Governor's Customer Service Initiative
- Kentucky's e3.ky.gov
- North Carolina's Utility Savings Initiative for State Facilities
- Oklahoma's Department of Energy Management's Weather Notification System
- Oklahoma's SoonerCare Emergency Room Utilization Project
- South Carolina's Teen After-School Center
- Tennessee's Value Plus Schools Initiative
- Texas' Emergency Technology Fund
- Virginia's Sanctions Reference Points
- Virginia's Division of Child Support Enforcement Cell Phone Records Initiative

midwestern

- Indiana's INShape Indiana
- Indiana's BioTown, USA
- Indiana's Digital Building Review, Approval and Recording
- Michigan's Business Portal
- Michigan's Continuity of Government Initiative
- Michigan's Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan Implementation
- North Dakota's Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE)
- Ohio's Best Rx
- Ohio's TEPOhio (Transitional Education Program Ohio)
- South Dakota's Community Transition

western

- Arizona's EZVoter Registration
- Arizona's Health-e Connection
- Colorado's Senior Service
- Utah's State Construction Registry (SCR)
- Washington's Brock Loshbaugh Act Provisions: Biennial Driver Qualification Program, Patrol Vehicle Collision Investigation Protocols, and Driver Retraining
- Washington's Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP)