

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GJ04-026

Reason for the Report

The Grand Jury chose to do a general investigation of the use of information technology in the county.

Scope of Investigation

People Interviewed

- Director of Informational Technologies (IT) Department
- Various Department Directors and their information technology (IT) staff
- County Chief Administrative Officer

Documents Reviewed

- El Dorado County Information Technologies Strategic Plan, updated July 2004
- El Dorado County Information Technologies Tactical Plans, updated October 2004
- El Dorado County computer and Network Resource Usage Policies and Standards Guide, revised June 2004
- County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors Policy A-10 Information Technology Steering Committee and Information Technology Acquisition Procedures, revised November 1999
- IT Department draft revision of County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors Policy A-10
- Draft report “The Future of El Dorado County Information Technologies and the Information Technologies Department” prepared by the Information Technologies Department dated November 1, 2003.

Background

The Grand Jury was interested in the progress the County was making in incorporating the use of information technology and the use of computers in their business plan.

Facts

1. Twenty-one of the 32 county departments depend on the IT Department for desktop and departmental application support. The IT Department has twenty-seven (27) staff supporting those departments.
2. The IT Department additionally supports all large enterprise applications, such as, payroll, property, FAMIS, BPrep, etc. and county-wide computer systems including the mainframe and network.
3. The IT Department staff occasionally supports the other eleven departments or develops multi-departmental “enterprise” applications.

4. The eleven departments not supported by IT have 31 employees dedicated to IT functions.
5. The industry standard for personal computer tech support is approximately 75 personal computers (PCs) per tech support employee.
6. IT Department PC tech support is at the 150-200 PCs per tech support employee. The average for the eleven departments with their own PC tech support staff is approximately 30 PCs per tech support employee.
7. Not all IT staff in the eleven departments with their own IT section is supervised by an information technologist or someone with specialized training in the IT field. IT requires a specialized knowledge base and an on-going need to acquire information about emerging technologies.
8. The County has adopted a county-wide IT Strategic Plan.
9. The county has adopted IT standards.
10. The county has implemented centralized purchasing of some hardware through the IT Department.
11. The county has an Information Technology Steering Committee to advise the IT Department, Board of Supervisors and the County Administration Officer.

Findings/Recommendations

1a. **Finding:** IT staff county-wide is not being used as effectively or as efficiently as they could be. Some departments like the Assessor and District Attorney Offices have excellent IT staff and appear to be far ahead in their use and integration of computers in their daily routines. Other departments are lagging. The IT draft document “The Future of El Dorado County Information Technologies and the Information Technologies Department” states that the county could **save \$650,000 per year** if the IT functions were more centralized with the IT Department in a “federated” or multi-tiered IT personnel configuration model. **The Grand Jury believes the savings could be well over \$1,000,000 per year.**

1b. **Recommendation:** Conduct a review of the delivery of IT services in the county with an eye towards reduction in the cost and an increase in efficiency and upgrading of services. Alternatives should include 1) outsourcing all or some IT services, 2) centralizing IT services within the IT Department and 3) implementing a federated or multi-tiered model as proposed in the IT Department’s November 1, 2003 draft report. The county should seriously think about a review by an outside agency.

2a. **Finding:** IT staff recommendations per County Policy A-10 on the purchase of either software or hardware are routinely ignored. The policy A-10 as written states that all purchase requests dealing with information processing shall be reviewed by Information Services for analysis and recommendation prior to purchase. It does not require their approval before software or hardware is purchased.

2b. **Recommendation:** Revise Policy A-10 to require that all software and hardware purchases be approved by the IT Department. Exceptions from established county IT standards would have to be approved by the IT Steering Committee.

3a. **Finding:** Departments acquiring or producing information or data that could be used by other county departments are sometimes reluctant to freely share that information or data. The public is not served well by these reluctant departments. As an example, the Building Department could better coordinate with the Assessor's Office when blueprint information is scanned and made available so that the Assessor's staff can complete their work in a timely manner.

3b. **Recommendation:** The Board of Supervisors, elected officials and the CAO shall empower an individual (IT Director?) to assure that all departments are sharing data and information between departments. This will help foster inter-departmental communication and help eliminate any duplication of data collection.

A response is required by the Board of Supervisors within 90 days. See Table of Contents, "*Notice to Respondents*".