

1. Application Form

NASCA 2001 Outstanding Program Awards

Program Title: **accessidaho.org** State of Idaho Official Website

Category: E-Government

State: Idaho

Submitted By: Bill Farnsworth

Title: IT Policy Analyst,
Information Technology Resource Management Council Staff

Department: Department of Administration

Address: 650 West State Street, Room 100

City: Boise

State: Idaho Zip: 83720-0003

Telephone: 208 332-1878

Fax: 208 334-2307

E-mail: bfarnswor@adm.state.id.us

a. Description of Program and Relative Significance to the Improvement and Operation/Efficiency of State Government

Access Idaho development began in late December of 1999, with its first completed project application released to the public in May of 2000. The State of Idaho designed its portal so that it would not require any new state tax dollars to develop electronic information access or electronic commerce applications. IIC is a private company that manages the portal and works with state agencies to develop web sites and online applications. Minimal user fees generated through enhanced access applications to commercially viable information are used to fund the network. The revenue from a few applications are helping to fund free website development for state agencies and information services that benefit both private citizens and businesses.

The private/public partnership of portal management improves the State's ability to stay competitive in a very dynamic environment. State government officials, continually challenged by limited resources, find that Access Idaho reacts more quickly to changes in the field of project development and technology upgrades.

In the first year of operations twenty-one projects were completed which ranged from building website templates to a subscription based service that allows citizens and businesses to search the Secretary of State's Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) lien database.

To accomplish such a large volume of projects in one year of operations Access Idaho upgraded hardware and software twice along with increasing its staff by two full time positions. This activity was done without having to wait on legislative approval for funds or rules that dictate the number of fulltime employees an agency is allowed. The freedom offered by a private manager was an administrative and financial benefit to the State.

One of the unique features of having a private manager part of a national organization is that it is linked to other state portals. IIC has used its nationwide network of portals to share and purchase equipment as new demands necessitate technology changes. Through its fourteen sister portals and parent company (National Information Consortium) IIC has the resources to solve problems quickly and with expert help from other more established portals.

Additional improvements in government operations were experienced when an 18% reduction in phone calls were logged after the Secretary of State's Business Entity and UCC search were placed online. In the case of the Attorney General's office, they were able to process an extremely high volume of citizen requests when it launched its online Telemarketing No Call list. Without the automation developed by Access Idaho the No Call registration process would have been significantly altered and slowed. Finally the dissemination of information from the State's University system was greatly enhanced by Access Idaho's development of the Idaho Electronic Campus. The online course finder

for distance learning enabled the State's University system to present its programs to potential students both nationally and internationally with no added expense.

Aggressive technology and development management, a wealth of national resources to draw from and at no tax burden to Idaho's citizens makes Access Idaho an effective and efficient choice for improving the State's digital government.

b. Calculation of actual savings in the short term and/or long term

Idaho citizens win with the Access Idaho's private public partnership model. IIC invested over half a million dollars into equipment and along with tens of thousands of dollars in staffing costs to support the portal's first year in operation. All sites and applications went up without burdening the State's budget. With zero financial investment by the State, its portal manager has increased traffic on Idaho's home page by three million hits a month.

Additional payback has occurred with Access Idaho managing the State's online credit card transactions. Again, a good example is the Attorney General's online No Call List application. In the first quarter of 2001 Access Idaho handled over \$150,000 in credit card transactions for the AG's office with about \$50,000 of those transactions occurring in the final hours of the registration period.

The Attorney General's office did not have the secure servers necessary to handle the encrypted transactions or a relationship with a bank to handle the credit card fees associated with a transaction. Access Idaho built the application, managed the credit card billing, registration activity at no cost to the AG's office or State of Idaho. With the Telemarketing No Call List lasting indefinitely, Access Idaho will continue to supply valuable technical and financial support to the AG's office at no expense.

Long term, the ability for Access Idaho to assist state employees in providing more efficient and effective service to its citizens by developing such applications as registering cars online, renewing occupational licenses, paying taxes and searching databases for records, will ultimately save Idaho taxpayers thousands of dollars. New processes being developed such as e-checks will increase the number of e-commerce services the state can deploy online. The potential of reducing administrative expenses while improving services to Idaho citizens at no cost to the Idaho taxpayer makes the Access Idaho a model of digital government.

c. Quantitative Benefits Realized by Service Recipients, Taxpayers, Agencies and/or the State

An excellent example of a benefit Idaho's citizens received from Access Idaho was in a project put forward by the Idaho Attorney General.

During the 2000 Idaho legislative session, a law was passed to create an Idaho Telemarketing No Call List. Its goal was to provide Idahoans with relief from unwanted

telephone solicitations. The bill came about through a two-year effort by Attorney General Al Lance and was subsequently signed into law by Governor Dirk Kempthorne. The registration period for the first Idaho No Call List was kicked off on January 2, 2001 during a news conference at the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit in Boise. A key component to the success of the list was making sure citizens had easy access to the registration forms. To do this the Attorney General's office in partnership with Access Idaho developed an online application that allowed citizens to register for the list twenty-four hours a day seven days a week from home or office.

To date, 23,370 citizens have registered for the program and 75 percent or 17,527 of those individuals registered on-line. On the last day of the quarterly registration cycle, 10 registrations per minute were recorded and 5,000 registrations were received online in one 24-hour period alone. Citizens are signing up online for the popular program at an average rate of 20 per day.

d. Relevancy of Use by Other State, Local and Federal Governments

In a relative short period of time, the Idaho Information Consortium, (IIC) the state's contractual partner who manages accessidaho.org, has worked closely with Idaho state government agencies to develop a variety of e-government applications and to plan for future needs. This cooperation will continue as the pace quickens in bringing more applications online.

Through collaboration, and as a result of effective implementation of realistic Service Level Agreements, a positive environment exists between the IIC and Idaho state government agencies, which fosters continual development of on-line service and information delivery for Idaho citizens.

The State has no significant ongoing costs associated directly with Access Idaho. Agencies have only the expense related to the time it takes their employees to work with the Access Idaho staff. The return on this minimal investment is hundreds of thousands of dollars saved annually in development and equipment costs, increased revenue from new online services and the ability to stay ahead of the technology curve.

As a result of the public/private partnership, the State of Idaho is offering better customer service, creating a more efficient government operation and saving taxpayer dollars. Access Idaho has already proven to be a tremendous return on investment and the future is bright. Access Idaho is an outstanding example of a public/private partnership and serves as a "best practice" for states confronted by the challenge of limited resources, like Idaho. Other government jurisdictions have contacted Idaho state officials to obtain information on Idaho's web portal and how to improve their respective online delivery of information and services to citizens. In December of 2000, the Council of State Governments named Idaho's web portal as the "best all-around website" the nation.

3. Executive Summary

Access Idaho is the State's official web portal and “electronic front door” for Idaho citizens and visitors to access on-line government services and information. Publicly launched in May of 2000, Access Idaho is a key component in Governor Dirk Kempthorne's Idaho eGovernment information technology initiatives to more effectively serve the state's citizens and to enhance economic development throughout all Idaho communities, rural and urban. Access Idaho is a web site and interactive application development shop, a marketing department and a bill processing and collection agency for Idaho eGovernment. The services are provided at no cost to any public agency in Idaho, including counties and cities.

A private partner, Idaho Information Consortium, IIC, a wholly owned subsidiary of National Information Consortium, manages the initiative. The state maintains control over Access Idaho through administration of the contract by the Division of Purchasing, Idaho Department of Administration, and through a review committee comprising Idaho government officials.

At the end of 2000, 1.5 million more visitors had pointed and clicked their way to on-line government information and services through **accessidaho.org** as they did when the new website was launched that previous May. That translates to the State of Idaho servicing the needs of 106,000 citizens a day. In a relative short period of time, the IIC has worked closely with Idaho state government agencies to develop a variety of e-government applications and to develop future options.

A few of the innovative application developments include:

- Idaho Electronic Campus, a portal for the state's universities and colleges offering a searchable database of all courses and eventually, on-line courses.
- The UCC Lien and Business entity search through the Secretary of State's office, allows businesses and citizens the ability to purchase Certificates of Existence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Real estate professionals can renew their licenses on line.
- Idaho consumers are protected from phone scams and telemarketing fraud through the Attorney General's Telemarketing "No Call" list where families can register on-line and take advantage of a new Idaho law to provide Idahoans with relief from unwanted telephone solicitations.

In late October of 2000, the first interactive application accepting credit cards for payment were put into service. Access Idaho users are acknowledging improvement in operations of government and access to its services. On the portal, functional categories, cross-indexing, multiple search capabilities and interactive citizen-oriented applications are all incorporated in the user interface to make Idaho government less complicated and more accessible. The portal is ADA compliant and functions with older browsers.

A major goal of the State of Idaho's eGovernment strategy is to make all levels of government more accessible to the general public, while streamlining state agency operations. The concept of Access Idaho was developed to accomplish this goal.