



# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Fall 2009

## Mississippi Electronic Court System

By Renee' Murray  
Information Systems Services

The Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) system is a comprehensive, Internet-based document filing and case management system that allows courts to maintain electronic case files. The filing of court pleadings and documents is carried out electronically through the MEC, and courts can make all case information immediately available electronically through the Internet. This system allows properly registered attorneys to file documents and to view and search court records from any location over the Internet, twenty-four hours a day. Non-attorneys and non-registered attorneys may read documents in the system by utilizing Public Access for Mississippi Electronic Courts (PAMEC).

In May 2007, the Mississippi State Supreme Court (MSSC) entered into an agreement with the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC) to study the feasibility of adapting the federal trial court case management and electronic filing system (CM/ECF) and related public access system (PACER) for use in state courts. The system was donated by AOUSC to the courts of Mississippi.

CM/ECF was developed by the AOUSC and has been in use for more than ten years. The system is currently used in over two hundred federal district and bankruptcy courts. The system is a proven case

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management and electronic filing system that was created *by* the courts for use *in* the courts. Because the MEC is based on the federal CM/ECF system, many Mississippi attorneys are already proficient users of the system.

In May 2008, the Madison County Chancery Clerk's Office began testing and evaluating the MEC. Electronic filing of court documents began on a voluntary basis for attorneys in July 2009. Mandatory electronic filing went into effect on September 15, 2009, for all new cases and for pleadings filed in cases that commenced on or after May 15, 2008. Public access to electronically filed court documents became available August 27, 2009.

It is hoped that in the future, the system can be offered to all the chancery, circuit, and county courts in the state. MSSC Chief Justice Bill Waller, Jr., who has led the project's development since its inception in 2004, said the e-filing system will improve efficiency. He went on to say, "We are optimistic that this system will allow seamless

### Mississippi Electronic Court System

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access by attorneys and the public across the different jurisdictions of our state.”

Chief Justice Waller also said that improved public access will increase public confidence in the judiciary. “When the public can see what we are doing in our courts, there is greater confidence in the judiciary,” he said. Attorneys will be able to file documents 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the Internet-based system. Documents are automatically docketed as part of the filing process and are immediately available electronically through user accounts. The system will provide quicker and less expensive delivery of documents and allow for easier tracking of case activity. Less floor space will be needed for records storage by court clerks and attorneys.

Work is expected to begin soon to adapt the e-filing system for use in Chancery Courts in Scott and Warren counties. Work is also expected to begin soon to adapt the case management system for use in circuit courts, with Madison County Circuit Court scheduled as the first circuit court to test the MEC system.

## Active Directory and Exchange: “Moving in that Direction”

*By Steve Patterson  
Data Services*

The Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) is moving forward with initiatives that leverage the State’s investment in the Microsoft platform being implemented in the State Data Center. This platform is a target

environment for future consolidation of strategic applications.

A key component of this initiative is the deployment of a central directory service across state government, using Microsoft’s Active Directory. Design of the Active Directory will be based on two single-forest, single-domain

directories, one for internal facing applications and the second is an extranet Active Directory for outward facing and/or general public accounts for any hosted applications. Also to be included in this effort is a messaging infrastructure solution that meets the State’s technical, business, and external access requirements using Microsoft Exchange 2010, which positions ITS well for the possibility of a future offering in unified communications.

### Active Directory

According to Microsoft, Active Directory provides the means to manage the identities and



relationships that make up an organization's network. Integrated with Windows Server 2008 R2, Active Directory provides out-of-the-box functionality needed to centrally configure and administer system, user, and application settings. Active Directory Domain Services (AD DS) stores directory data and manages communication between users

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### Active Directory and Exchange:

#### “Moving in that Direction”

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and domains, including user logon processes, authentication, and directory searches. In addition, more integrated roles enable identity and access control features and technologies, providing a central way of managing credentials and technologies to allow only legitimate users access to devices, applications, and data.

### Active Directory Domain Services

AD DS is the central location for configuration information, authentication requests, and information about all of the objects that are stored within a forest. Active Directory allows for efficient management of users, computers, groups, printers, applications, and other directory-enabled objects from one secure, centralized location.

### Exchange Server 2007 Features at a Glance

*(<http://www.microsoft.com/exchange/2007/evaluation/features>)*

#### Built-in Protection

- Anti-spam and Antivirus
- Confidential Messaging
- Compliance
- Business Continuity

#### Anywhere Access

- Calendaring
- Mobile Messaging
- Web-based Messaging
- Unified Messaging

#### Operational Efficiency

- Administration and Automation
- Deployment
- Scalability and Performance
- Extensibility and Programmability

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## Health Information Technology (HIT)

*By Kevin Gray*

*Strategic Services*

ITS has been actively involved with the Mississippi Health Information Infrastructure Task Force (the Task Force), established by Governor Haley Barbour in 2007. The purpose of the Task Force is to improve the quality and safety of healthcare delivery by means of the expedited adoption and implementation of Health Information Technology (HIT) and Health Information Exchange (HIE) across the state. Work accomplished by the Task Force led to a recommendation that Mississippi implement a “proof of concept” HIE project. Soon thereafter, the Office of the Governor was able to secure funding to establish the Mississippi Coastal Health Information Exchange (MSCHIE). The primary goal of the MSCHIE is to establish a restructuring effort to improve patient care delivery in Mississippi’s six coastal counties that were most affected by Hurricane Katrina.

In October 2008, MSCHIE began Phase I of implementation with three disparate coastal stakeholders. The three provider organizations have begun to share basic clinical information, lab results, and medication history over the MSCHIE, and new data feeds continue to be added. Phase II, currently underway, is expanding the MSCHIE by

## Health Information Technology (HIT)

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adding more hospital participants and establishing an extensive provider outreach program.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Mississippi is eligible to receive funding from the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. The funding covers planning and implementation projects to advance appropriate and secure health information exchange (HIE) across the United States. With the cooperative agreement funding and additional matching monies, Mississippi intends to formalize an approved state plan and then implement the infrastructure for a statewide HIE, the Mississippi Health Information Network (M-HIN). The M-HIN will utilize a technology platform capable of rapid connectivity and be able to interface with providers of care, public health organizations, local and regional health information exchanges (such as MSCHIE), as well as provide connectivity to the National Health Information Network.

At the request of Governor Haley Barbour, ITS will serve as the State Designated Entity for the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program. In close collaboration with the Office of the Governor, ITS will maintain the day-to-day responsibility for key tasks such as overall project management and monitoring of the project's ongoing progress, preparation of reports, and communications with other partners and the Office of the National Coordinator. With an established history of successful project implementation and oversight, ITS will employ standard project management best practices and effective planning, organizing, and managing of resources, to bring about the successful completion of the specific project tasks and objectives of the

State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program.

The Task Force structure was to expire December 31, 2009. However, with the current events surrounding the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program and the M-HIN, a decision was made to extend the duties of the Task Force until June 30, 2010. During the planning stage and initial phases of the M-HIN, the Task Force will be instrumental in providing key stakeholders in the development of the state's strategic and operational plan, as well as in achieving the project's overarching objectives and outcomes.

## IP Enabled Communications

*By Bill Pinson*

*Telecommunications Services*

ITS provides statewide voice and video communications for state entities and local governing authorities within the Capitol Complex, the Greater Jackson Area, and across the state through a variety of communications services. These services are provided through either contractual arrangements with service providers or through state owned and managed products. ITS has continued to track the expansion and acceptance of IP enabled applications and services in the communications industry, which have had a tremendous impact on traditional voice and video communications. Many equipment manufacturers have announced the end of support for traditional products, driving customers to upgrade or replace critical telecommunications systems and services with IP enabled technology.

Voice over IP (VoIP), on-demand IP video, unified messaging, and Internet based web conferencing will soon be the norm for state government

### IP Enabled Communications

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communications. As agencies upgrade or replace legacy systems at their headquarters and remote office sites, the need to develop a core IP enabled infrastructure to accommodate these new applications at the enterprise level is critical. While many state agencies and vendors prefer a self-managed solution, ITS does not consider this solution to be in the best interest of the state. ITS is working to craft a policy set that will guide investment toward a centrally managed VoIP solution that integrates into the state's existing infrastructure and will provide a standardized and cost-effective solution across the enterprise. In addition, a centrally managed solution will enhance network security and provide the ability to easily integrate these applications with other hosted IP services.

VoIP is a component of a converged network. A converged network is one whereby different communications medium are converted into a single physical network for example voice, data, and video. By joining multiple physical networks into a single converged network, economies of scale can be achieved. However, the network foundation has to be designed to withstand the additional traffic. What was once acceptable for non-real-time applications is not necessarily acceptable for real-time applications such as voice and video. In the event of problems such as delays, packet loss, and collisions, voice and video applications are not as forgiving as data applications.

The Telecom Services Division of ITS is in the process of upgrading the core network to provide VoIP services in the most reliable and secure manner possible. Currently, Telecom is in the process of conducting a VoIP pilot program with the

cooperation of the Division of Medicaid to determine the best practices to provide this service to our end-users. Upon completion of the pilot, which is scheduled for approximately 60 days, Telecom will develop a template design in order to create the ITS VoIP policy. ITS will then be able to deliver these emerging technologies and service in a reliable manner consistent with the performance of traditional telephony.

## New EPL Model

*By Jane Woosley*

*Information Systems Services*

Express Products Lists (EPLs) are multi-vendor awards that meet Mississippi requirements for legal purchases. The use of EPLs is governed under Procurement Instruments: Express Products Lists (EPLs) as stated in the ITS Procurement Handbook.

In November 2009, the Micro Express Products List (EPL) will move from a pilot phase where manufacturers optionally hosted special "Manufacturer EPL Websites" for the State of Mississippi with their approved products and pricing, to a new EPL Model where these Manufacturer EPL Websites are mandated for participation. The new Micro EPL number will be 3605 and also includes a new product category for Netbooks as well as products formerly on the "GIS Hardware EPL" such as engineering workstations and large plotters. Customers will see a revised Micro EPL interface on the ITS website that enables you to search by product category, by manufacturer name, or by seller name. The resulting screens from your query will lead you to

URL links for these Manufacturer EPL Websites, to the list of approved sellers for each Manufacturer Reseller Group, and to purchasing information

### New EPL Model

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about each seller. The ITS EPL Team also has begun piloting these Manufacturer sites as an option for the LAN and Video EPLs.

Change can be difficult for us all, but we hope our customers will see benefits from this new model, such as fresher product lists, a greater variety of product lines and within the next FY, consolidation of offerings on multiple EPLs.

*For help or additional information:  
Contact the Procurement Help Desk  
Telephone: 601-576-HELP (4357)  
Email: [isshelp@its.ms.gov](mailto:isshelp@its.ms.gov)*

## On-Line Training Services

*By Susan McLain  
ITS Institute*

The ITS Institute has entered into an agreement with MindLeaders to provide self-paced, on-line training to Mississippi public entities. State agencies, county and local governments, public schools, and institutions of higher learning are eligible to participate in this agreement.

MindLeaders offers over 2,300 courses available via the Internet. Courses range from beginning end-user courses such as Basic Windows to advanced technical courses, Cisco and Oracle, for IT professionals. For a complete listing, visit [www.mindleaders.com/products/catalog.html](http://www.mindleaders.com/products/catalog.html).

Training is available anywhere, anytime. Students progress at their own speed and can return to the courses for "just-in-time" reference. Skill Assessment helps students measure their progress. There is sound instructional design and consistent content for all students. Throughout the courses there are multi-step simulations to give students an opportunity to practice what they have learned.

For more information on how the ITS Institute can help meet your IT training needs, please contact Susan McClain, by calling (601)359-6196.

## Recent Board Appointments

*By Michele Blocker  
Internal Services*

The Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) welcomes recently appointed board members. In accordance with Mississippi Code 25-53-7, Governor Haley Barbour has appointed Ms. Lynn C Patrick of Madison and Dr. Rodney Pearson of Starkville to the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services Board. Ms. Patrick, Board Vice-Chairman, and Dr. Pearson have both previously served on the ITS Board and they join Thomas A. Wicker, Chairman, Derek Gibbs, and John Hairston to complete the five member board. Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant has designated Senator Sampson Jackson, II - District 32 to serve in an advisory capacity to the ITS Board. The ITS Board typically meets on the last Thursday of every month at 1:30 p.m. in the Robert G. Clark Building. A schedule for FY2010 meetings can be found on the ITS website [www.its.ms.gov](http://www.its.ms.gov).

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