Category: 100
Number: 134

Subject: **INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SERVICES POLICY**

1.   PURPOSE: The Saginaw County Board of Commissioners has established this policy statement to ensure that the County receives the maximum benefit from its investment in data processing, while providing an excellent service to the users and public. The mission of Information Systems and Services (ISS) is to provide its users with the best possible options and solutions for their information handling needs, balancing the need to be efficient and productive with the cost.

2.   AUTHORITY: Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.

3.   APPLICATION: This policy applies to Information Systems and Services (ISS).

4.   RESPONSIBILITY: Information Systems and Services (ISS) is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

5.   DEFINITION(S):

        5.1   Capacity - The amount of information the computer can store and the total amount of work that it can do in a given amount of time.

        5.2   Central Site Computer Equipment - All of the computers and related equipment housed in the Information Systems and Services (ISS) computer room in the basement of the Courthouse.

        5.3   Configure - To set up and make ready for use.

        5.4   Data   Information

        5.5   Data Processing - The handling, manipulation and processing of information.

        5.6   Disaster - Any occurrence which would cause Information Systems and Services to be unable to provide the services previously available. Possible causes of a disaster are equipment malfunction, sabotage or act of God.

        5.7   Hardware - The physical computer equipment.

        5.8   Installation - Putting the hardware and software into place and making it operational.

5.9 Output - Printed reports, forms and other media, which contain information from the computer system.

5.10 Saginaw County - The aggregate of the Agencies, Departments and Elected Officials, which are under the auspices of the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.

5.11 Software - Computer programs.

5.12 Support - Assistance in hardware and/or software selection, acquisition, installation, implementation, training and problem resolution. Supported equipment and software are those items for which we accept the responsibility for providing support.

5.13 Terminal Equipment - Any computer equipment located outside of the computer room. This includes terminals, printers, personal computers, protocol converters and other types of equipment.

5.14 Users - The personnel and departments which use the services of Information Systems and Services.

6. POLICY:

6.1 Duties. Information Systems and Services (ISS) shall do the following:

6.1.1 Provide for the general administration and operation of ISS, its personnel and all equipment under its control.

6.1.2 Provide programming services to users as needed.

6.1.3 Act as a consultant to Saginaw County departments and outside agencies, as authorized, on issues related to data processing.

6.1.4 Perform research into new or promising areas related to data processing.

6.1.5 Provide planning to ensure that adequate capacity is available for future needs.

6.1.6 Assist users in the development and implementation of disaster recovery plans.

6.1.7 Maintain a center to support the users of personal computers within Saginaw County.

6.1.8 Provide for the marketing of any software developed under the auspices of Saginaw County.

6.2 General Administration. ISS shall strive to operate in an efficient and organized manner. It shall effectively control the resources available to it and allocate their use to provide the greatest benefit to Saginaw County. To this end, ISS shall perform the following functions:

6.2.1 Track Purchase Orders

6.2.1.1 Record and track orders for goods and services placed by or for ISS to ensure vendor compliance and to prevent duplication.

6.2.2 Maintain Inventory Equipment

6.2.2.1 Maintain accurate inventories of computer hardware and software. Physical inventories shall be taken periodically.

6.2.3 Maintain Stock of Supplies and Spare Parts

6.2.3.1 Maintain stocks of supplies and spare parts at levels, which will permit normal operation of the department and its users. Supplies and spare parts shall be made available to other County departments as needed. Billing for supplies and parts provided to other departments shall be in accordance with the general County policy.

6.2.4 Notify Users of Policy Changes

6.2.4.1 As guidelines and policies are established, distribute them to all affected parties.

6.2.5 Inform Users of Options Open to Them

6.2.5.1 Keep its users informed of hardware and software options available to them.

6.2.6 Track Warranty and Maintenance Agreements

6.2.6.1 Maintain accurate records of hardware and software warranty and maintenance agreements. The expense of such agreements shall be evaluated for cost effectiveness. Vendor compliance with these agreements shall be monitored and appropriate action taken to remedy non-compliance.

6.2.7   Bill Users for Services

6.2.7.1   Data processing is an enterprise fund in Saginaw County. This means that it is not supported by the general fund and must, therefore, cover its expenditures by billing its users. The exact method of billing is determined by the Financial Services Division of the Controller's Office.

6.2.8   Maintain Statistics

6.2.8.1   Maintain and make available upon request of the department head, information pertaining to the access of data stored on equipment under the control of the department.

6.2.9   Assess Needs and Satisfaction

6.2.9.1   Periodically monitor the needs and satisfaction of the users and address any unmet needs or dissatisfaction.

6.2.10   Develop Standards and Procedures Manual

6.2.10.1   Create and maintain a document, which shall set forth the standards of quality and performance expected of it and the users, as well as any procedures established to facilitate achieving these levels. Pertinent portions of this document shall be communicated to all affected parties.

6.2.11   Assist with Cost Justification

6.2.11.1   Provide assistance with the justification process for terminal equipment and software.

6.2.12   Provide Competent and Professional Personnel

6.2.12.1   Provide an atmosphere, which will attract and retain competent personnel by supporting training, continuing education and environmental conditions to fulfill the stated goals and objectives of ISS.

6.3   Managing the Central Site. ISS shall manage the central site equipment to provide maximum service to the users by performing the following functions:

6.3.1   Select Equipment

      6.3.1.1   Select equipment and supplies in accordance with the needs of the users. Equipment may be new, used or refurbished, the option chosen being based on its net benefit to Saginaw County. All acquisitions shall be made in accordance with the general County policy.

6.3.2   Install Equipment

      6.3.2.1   Install or oversee the installation of all central site equipment by competent contractors.

6.3.3   Maintain Equipment

      6.3.3.1   Oversee the maintenance of the central site equipment; make every effort to repair equipment failures in a timely manner and establish preventative maintenance procedures to minimize equipment failures. Arrange for service agreements to be in place on all critical equipment.

6.3.4   Provide Security

      6.3.4.1   Recommend, initiate and maintain necessary security procedures. Such procedures shall be designed to prevent unauthorized access to, removal of, or damage to equipment or information.

6.3.5   Tune for Efficiency

      6.3.5.1   Always attempt to make the resources under their control operate as efficiently as possible. This will be accomplished by continually monitoring the systems performance and making such adjustments as seem necessary.

6.4   Computer Operations. ISS shall be responsible for the operation of the central site equipment. To this end we shall:

6.4.1   Run Programs

      6.4.1.1   Initiate or arrange for the initiation of computer programs on the central site equipment, to perform functions necessary for or requested by the users.

6.4.2 Distribute Output

      6.4.2.1   Arrange for the distribution of the output generated by programs run on the central site equipment.

6.4.3 Create Backups

      6.4.3.1   Create, on a daily basis, backup copies of information stored on the central site equipment as a safeguard against the loss of the information. Once a week, take backup copies to an off site location as an additional safeguard.

6.4.4 Keep Records

      6.4.4.1   Keep an accurate log of the tasks performed and the steps taken to perform these tasks.

6.4.5 Schedule Work

      6.4.5.1   Organize and schedule the workload on the central site equipment to obtain the greatest benefit to Saginaw County with the resources available.

6.4.6 Resolve Problems

      6.4.6.1   Provide assistance to the user community as they interact with the central site and work with the users to resolve any problems, which arise during this interaction.

6.5 Terminal Equipment. ISS is responsible for managing the County's terminal equipment to ensure compatibility and proper operation. To provide this service, ISS shall perform the following functions:

6.5.1 Specify Supported Configurations

      6.5.1.1   Recommendations shall be made to users as to what supported equipment to acquire. Such recommendations shall be made based on compatibility, price, performance and reliability. Equipment selected for use shall be ordered by ISS.

      6.5.1.2   We assume no responsibility for equipment, which we do not support.

6.5.2 Install Equipment

6.5.2.1 All supported terminal equipment shall be shipped to ISS where it will be unpacked, set up, configured and tested for proper operation. ISS shall then arrange for installation at the user's site. The installation shall consist of setting up the equipment, connecting all signal and power cables, testing and basic instruction on the use of the hardware.

6.5.2.2 It shall remain the responsibility of the user to ensure that sufficient space, power outlets, signal cables and furniture is available.

6.5.3 Assist in Equipment Relocation

6.5.3.1 ISS shall assume no responsibility for damage to equipment moved without their assistance. No equipment is to be moved without the knowledge of ISS.

6.5.4 Provide for Equipment Maintenance

6.5.4.1 Maintenance procedures shall be carried out by ISS personnel, contracted maintenance organizations or user personnel. ISS shall provide instructions to the users on proper maintenance procedures where appropriate.

6.5.4.2 If terminal equipment cannot be repaired in a timely manner, loaner equipment shall be provided if available.

6.6 Programming Services. ISS shall be responsible for all software used on the central site equipment. To provide this service, the department shall:

6.6.1 Create New Applications

6.6.1.1 Undertake the development and acquisition of new software as the need and justification warrants. Such undertakings shall be initiated only after the project has been shown to be of positive benefit to Saginaw County. ISS shall prioritize and allocate resources to such projects according to the benefits each accords to Saginaw County. Any software developed or acquired shall meet the needs of the user community and shall be compatible with the existing hardware and software.

6.6.2 Maintain Existing Software

      6.6.2.1 Maintain, enhance and replace the software used on the central site equipment as needed, justified and possible. Such actions shall be undertaken in a manner, which will minimize the effect on the user community, provide the greatest benefit at the least cost and provide for future needs.

6.6.3 Document All Systems

      6.6.3.1 Maintain accurate documentation for all software used on the central site equipment. Such documentation shall be in a form specified by the ISS standards manual.

6.6.4 Train Users

      6.6.4.1 Users will be trained on the software that they use. All pertinent documentation shall be made available to the users as the need warrants.

6.6.5 Support the Users

      6.6.5.1 Personnel will answer questions about and resolve problems with the software used on the central site equipment. Every effort shall be made to handle problems in a timely manner and resolve them correctly on the first attempt.

6.7 Consulting Services. ISS shall act as a consultant to Saginaw County departments as requested or deemed necessary. The scope of such consultations shall be to provide information and recommendations on issues related to data processing.

6.8 Research. ISS shall conduct research, either on its own initiative or in response to requests from others into areas related to data processing which show promise of being of benefit to Saginaw County or its agencies.

6.9 Capacity Planning. ISS shall plan for the future. The department shall monitor its own operation as well as the operation of the County as a whole so that it may attempt to anticipate the needs and changes, which will impact the data processing needs of the County. To this end, ISS shall:

6.9.1 Create Planning Documents

      6.9.1.1 Prepare and maintain both short range and long range planning documents which detail the foreseeable data processing needs

of the County. These documents shall be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis or as new information becomes available.

6.9.1.2   These documents will set forth the known or anticipated needs in the areas of hardware, software, personnel, actions and detail areas that will require further research.

6.9.2   Monitor System Use For the Purpose of Capacity Planning

6.9.2.1   Put in place procedures for monitoring the capacity and usage of the resources under its control. The information gained from this monitoring shall be used to analyze the effect that any anticipated growth will have on the performance of the central site equipment.

6.10   Disaster Recovery. ISS shall, in cooperation with the user, design and test plans which will permit the users to continue operation in the event of a data processing disaster.

6.10.1   Information Systems and Services Responsibilities

6.10.1.1   ISS shall be responsible for initiating the disaster planning process. They shall ensure that adequate data processing resources are allocated to complete the plan and to perform any preparatory functions the plan details.

6.10.1.2   Should a disaster occur and ISS be unable to provide service to its users, the ISS shall notify the affected parties of the situation. Each user shall then have the option of implementing their disaster plan.

6.10.1.3   A complete overview of the Disaster Recovery Plan is contained in the Standards and Procedures Manual.

6.10.2   User Department Responsibilities

6.10.2.1   It is the responsibility of the user to provide personnel and time so that a workable disaster plan may be developed. The user must determine which data processing functions their office must continue to perform in the event of a disaster and what data will be required to perform these functions.

6.10.2.2   The user shall be responsible for providing the necessary resources to operate their department in the event of an emergency and shall bear any additional costs incurred.

6.11   PC Center. ISS shall operate a center, which is responsible for the support of personal computers used by Saginaw County. However, the ultimate responsibility for personal computer use rests with the user.

6.11.1 The responsibility of ISS includes the following:

6.11.1.1   Physical and data security

6.11.1.2   Provision of personnel for operation including a backup

6.11.1.3   Allocation of time for training

6.11.1.4   Backup of data and cleanliness of equipment

6.11.2 The PC Center personnel will assist the user in these functions.

6.11.3 The primary responsibilities of the PC Center shall be:

6.11.3.1   Definition of Supported Configurations

6.11.3.1.1 A limited number of personal computer configurations will be supported in order to assure a level of standardization and effective use of technical support personnel. The PC Center shall determine and maintain specifications regarding hardware configurations, suggested vendors, supported operating systems, approved communications, add in boards and supported application software.

6.11.3.1.2 ISS will not install or support illegal or unlicensed copies of copyrighted software. True public domain software will be supported if possible.

6.11.3.2   Support of Users

6.11.3.2.1 Support of personal computer users shall be centralized and managed in the PC Center. Initial PC installations, on going assistance and trouble shooting for supported hardware and software will be provided by the PC Center. Training in personal computer concepts, hardware operation and software applications will be in the PC Center.

6.11.3.3   Education of Users

6.11.3.3.1 PC Center personnel will be available to provide the best possible education to the users. They will tailor education curricula for supported software to the particular needs of each user. Pre-requisites will be established for all classes.

6.11.3.4   Maintain a Library of Surplus Software

6.11.3.4.1 Collect unused software and prior editions and reallocate it as appropriate, provided there is no violation of copyright law.

7.   ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES: NONE

8.   CONTROLLER/CAO LEGAL COUNSEL REVIEW: The Controller/CAO has determined that this policy as submitted to the Board of Commissioners contains the necessary substance in order to carry out the purpose of the policy. County Civil Counsel has determined that this policy as submitted contains content that appears to be legal activities of the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE: APPROVED AS TO LEGAL CONTENT:
Saginaw County Controller/CAO   Saginaw County Civil Counsel

APPROVED: November 23, 1999