Welcome to the first issue of the Office of Information Technology Connect Newsletter! The Newsletter will be distributed throughout all Summit County Offices to keep everyone informed on current information technology ideas, solutions and initiatives across a wide spectrum of applications and devices.

Our hope for this publication is to cater to technology users at all levels of expertise and interest. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) has a staff of professionals with a full range of experience and knowledge. Our staff will be frequent contributors to the newsletter; however the door is always open to reader contributions.

If there is something that you would like to see explored in this newsletter, we urge you to let us know about it. Any and all feedback is welcome. To get in touch with our office, contact us at ITSupport@summitoh.net or (330) 643-2013.

VISION: The Office of Information Technology will provide exemplary customer service, fiscally responsible innovation and proactive leadership.

MISSION
To provide innovative, quality information technology solutions to citizens, the business community and county offices and staff.

To deliver timely, concise and effective responses to customer requirements through teamwork.

To evaluate and implement developing technologies for cost-effectiveness, ease of access and use by the public and internal staff through secure web based technologies.

To develop and maintain a competent, skilled staff that understands emerging information technologies to better serve the user community.
Mark Petit was hired as Summit County’s first Chief Information Officer in July of 2015. The first five months were filled with building a staff from the IT ranks in the county’s seven charter offices. Now, with everyone in place, Mr. Petit is ready to take on the new year...

You’ve been handed a great opportunity—it’s a start-up—you get to mold things: This has never been done before; this type of integration within a county government, in Ohio. There are a lot of moving parts and it’s a challenge. The first year we are going to spend integrating where appropriate the skills within the offices. Integrating the technology into a centralized data center. Focusing a lot on process and measurement. On the technology side the focus will be on the infrastructure physically moving servers or virtual servers to one location and making sure that security and disaster recovery are in place.

Beyond the first year we need to develop a three to five year plan as to what things we need to do. Things like Mobile Computing; millennials and their expectations and access to our business systems as we begin to hire them into the county. We must develop a strategic long term plan. This has never been thought of before.

Tell us about your Tech Background: I spent 25 years as a business and information technology consultant. I worked in a wide variety of businesses and organizations of all different sizes. I consulted in businesses the size of the Summit County. So an infrastructure and organization this size is familiar to me.

No surprise then that you are developing a “Consultant” mindset for the OIT: Typically a consultant is viewed as someone who sees a lot of different things and brings that wide breadth of knowledge to the business issues at hand. Consultant to me, means problem solver and customer oriented.

How do you turn tech oriented people into Customer Service oriented people? We talk about empathy and reinforce clear and open communication. Ultimately we don’t want to make people feel bad they have a problem, we just want to resolve it. We do not want to point blame if they did something wrong, we just want to help and educate them to do better. My predecessors who hired our Support Desk individuals found people who enjoy technology, embrace it; but also have a nice “bedside manner” and can talk to people.

Why is customer service important in a government setting? Technology is the foundation for most of all business information that comes out of this organization. It’s important that the people using our systems can use them efficiently. Users need a friendly, customer oriented group that is going to solve their issues so they can continue to do the business functions they need to do. Prior to me coming here the focus of the IT people was on the department they were working in. Breaking down those “silos”—having an Office of Information Technology—having me here, with a customer focus message, is critical for the success of this office.

We are rolling out an improved version of our IT Support Desk software, what changes are we going to see? From my perspective the reporting capabilities of the software is most important. The new version offers executive level reporting that will allow me to know more details on what issues we’re having, our time to resolution and the metrics that surrounds a support desk. We will have a portal for employees to use to give us more information up front on the technical issues so we can resolve them faster.

Tell us about the Information Technology Board that you report to: The board puts a lot of faith in me and the capabilities of this office to do things from an integration standpoint. They are a diverse group of leaders who require our (our) support to drive efficiencies through the productive use of technology. Also, we are assembling an advisory group of other CIO’s from large, regional companies that I can use as a sounding board. They will give credibility to major strategic initiatives as we move forward.

How much of a challenge has it been to convince people that change is good? How have you been handling that? Change is managed best through communication and stakeholder buy in. We have the support of the elected officials and their deputies that see the value of the Office of Information Technology. They want us to succeed. The communication coming out of our office needs to be clear and frequent and people need to understand the value of what we are doing and our success stories. Ultimately this is about saving and making the services of Summit County better. We need to remain focused on that. We need to continue to provide value.
The New OIT

...continued from p1

The problem: the multiple disjointed IT operations create large operational inefficiencies and cost more to operate. The solution: creation of a consolidated IT department lead by a Chief Information Officer (CIO) reporting to an IT board comprised of the various county stakeholders.

In November of 2014 voters approved a charter amendment to consolidate county IT departments under the direction of the CIO. Mark Petit reports to an IT Board comprised of the County Executive, Council President, Fiscal Officer, Clerk of Courts, Engineer, Sheriff and Prosecutor.

The OIT consists of about 30 employees, all from IT positions that existed in the county’s seven charter offices. The employees were selected to be part of the OIT following interviews to determine skill sets, experience and knowledge of a wide range of information technology practices and processes. These professionals represent a solid core of expertise that includes software engineers, database administrators, network engineers, and desktop/client support personnel. Combined with other professionals specializing in wireless communication, telecommunication, data analysis, web design, internal and external public relations and communications; The OIT is a dynamic organization well suited to handling all IT projects and challenges.

“We have assembled a team of forward thinking professionals who are fully committed to assuring the OIT lives up to expectations.” According to CIO Mark Petit, “The Office of Information Technology is prepared to lead and succeed.”

IT SUPPORT DESK

The Office of Information Technology staff has begun a redirection of efforts to better serve the County of Summit Employees and its processes. Through a reorganization of staff, updated software programs and a focus on process improvement. The department is excited to bring an enhanced experience to the end user, the customer, and improved collaboration across all offices.

Under the direction of the CIO, The Office of Information Technology has been restructured to leverage the strength and experience of its team.

This dynamic team will lead the way to improved processes and ensure that customer service is the number one priority.

In support of the initiative of continuous improvement, an updated IT Support Desk Software is currently being configured and tested. This new version of software is user friendly, and will provide valuable metrics to the Information Technology management team.

More information means better decision making, prioritizing and an improved end user experience. The information gathered by the improved IT Support Desk Software will be extremely valuable for identifying trends, but interactions with our end users are priceless. In order to streamline processes and eliminate bottlenecks and disconnects, we need to better understand current challenges.

Through process re-engineering and analysis sessions, The Office of Information Technology staff will partner with departments to increase efficiency, reduce redundancy and ultimately improve the overall constituent experience.

OIT SECURITY TIPS

Rules for Strong Passwords

• Do make them at least 7 characters or more.
• Do include a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols (if permitted).
• Do use different passwords for different accounts and systems.
• Don’t use all or part of your name or nickname.
• Don’t use family names, pet names, addresses or phone numbers.
• Don’t use adjacent characters on the keyboard.

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THE OIT TEAM LEADERS

In November of 2015, OIT formally established its organizational structure and all of the leaders were in place as of November 30th. Under the CIO, there are 5 distinct areas for the IT organization. Bradley Pyett has joined OIT as the Assistant Director of IT and oversees the infrastructure of networks and servers. Brad is second in command. Stephen Byrne has been named Deputy Director of IT and oversees the application development team. Dennis Babb joins OIT to lead the IT support and customer service efforts for the help desk and all end user computing. Rich Strain joins OIT as the Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and is tasked to implement key network and system management tools to monitor and manage our computing resources. Administration is led by Jaci Stein. Jaci will provide executive aid to the CIO and leadership team along with being the HR and purchasing liaison.

Please join us in welcoming these individuals to The Office of Information Technology!

TECHnology takes a leading role in the newest addition to the County of Summit’s brick and mortar inventory. The Triangle Building in the 11-hundred block of South Main Street in Akron, the soon to be new home of the Department of Job & Family Services, Department of Environmental Services and several other agencies, is the type of Information Technology challenge Chief Information Officer Mark Petit is cutout to do.

“Yes, this is a blank canvas type of opportunity for the Office of Information Technology”, said Mr. Petit. “We have worked closely with the decision makers to come up with a detailed plan for present and future needs. We have looked at the available technology and have integrated it into the Triangle Building infrastructure.” Here are some of the technologies that will be in play at The Triangle Building:

- State of the art audio/visual conference room technology that can handle presentations from a wide range of devices.
- Networking infrastructure featuring Virtual Local Area Networks (VLAN) and wireless solutions.
- Emerging remote access technologies as part of the support infrastructure.
- Digital signage to help direct and aid visitors to the building.

“We will have solid implementation of technology that isn’t bringing a bunch of “old baggage” into a newer, modern installation”

- Mark Petit, CIO -

Above: (Left) Triangle Building (Rendering from SoL), (Middle) Mark Petit-OIT, Brian Clark-Physical Plants, Carol Chimera & Mike Weant-DOES tour The Triangle Building, (Right) Triangle Building