

# Strategic Plan



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL  
OF NORTH DAKOTA

Updated by  
Clearwater Communications  
December 2008

## **I. Executive Summary – A Call to Action**

In an effort to accelerate the growth and effectiveness of the Information Technology Council of North Dakota (ITCND) and advance the information technology (IT) industry in North Dakota, ITCND hosted its sixth annual strategic planning session on Oct.13, 2008, at Dakota Carrier Network in Fargo. The session was facilitated by Dana Schaar, Clearwater Communications.

### **Participants**

The following ITCND board members and special guests provided valuable input during the ITCND strategic planning session:

- Seth Arndorfer, ITCND Board Member, Dakota Carrier Network
- Mike Eggl, ITCND Vice President, Basin Electric Power Cooperative
- Ron Gronneberg, ITCND Board Member, City of Fargo
- Katie Hasbargen, ITCND Board Member, Microsoft Fargo
- Nicole Hushka, ITCND Board Member, Verety LLC
- Gary Inman, ITCND President, Echelon Corporation
- Scott Kautzman, ITCND Board Member, NISC
- Doug Remboldt, ITCND Board Member, NISC
- Mark Sjurseth, ITCND Board Member, Sundog
- Jeff Swank, ITCND Treasurer, ITD
- Deana Wiese, ITCND Executive Director
- Laura Willard, ex-officio ITCND Board Member, representative of Gov. Hoeven

### **Outcomes**

The following accomplishments were achieved during the ITCND strategic planning session:

1. Created an opportunity for social and network interaction
2. Reviewed the ITCND vision, mission and goals
3. Reviewed 2007 accomplishments
4. Identified priorities for the 2008 ITCND Work Plan and Budget
5. Established a 2008 Strategic Plan

## **II. Background – ITCND’s Foundation**

The Information Technology Council of North Dakota (ITCND) was founded in 2000 by North Dakota business, education and government leaders who recognized the need to strengthen the state’s IT infrastructure and position itself as a national leader in IT. Those attending the 2008 strategic planning session solidified the original vision and mission of the organization. They also reviewed and provided recommendations to the goals and accomplishments of the organization.

### **Vision**

A stronger North Dakota through information technology excellence

### **Mission**

Actively encourage the use, growth and development of information technology in North Dakota

### **Goals**

1. **Promotion and Communication:** Enhance North Dakota’s information technology industry identity and serve as the voice of the North Dakota information technology community
2. **Knowledge Sharing and Networking:** Provide a forum for sharing educational, business and technical experiences among North Dakota’s information technology community
3. **Talent Development:** Actively assist in the development of a world-class information technology education system in North Dakota, create interest in information technology careers in North Dakota, and support development and training of a world-class information technology workforce
4. **Business Development and Entrepreneurship:** Advocate a climate of information technology entrepreneurial opportunity, commerce activity and industry growth
5. **Advocacy and Lobbying:** Represent North Dakota information technology interests in public policy matters and legislative affairs
6. **Infrastructure Development:** Work for affordable access to state-of-the-art voice, video and data service for all North Dakotans

### **Accomplishments**

1. Recognized as a leading advocate for IT in North Dakota
2. Lobbied successfully in 2003 for the passage of the following:
  - a) Maintaining a sales tax exemption for non-manufacturing primary sector businesses that invest in IT and telecommunications equipment that first passed in 2001
  - b) Securing \$20 million for ConnectND, North Dakota’s integrated software system
  - c) Creating a \$15 million New Venture Fund for early stage business formation
  - d) Allowing higher education institutions to continue to provide wide-area network services to occupants of technology parks or incubators
  - e) Creating centralized state procurement requirements for professional services
  - f) Placing direct deposit payroll payment on the same levels as cash or check payments
  - g) Creating open records exemptions for computer security information
  - h) Approving seed capital investment tax credits, \$5.25 million for Centers for Excellence and Internships for ND Youth in the Department of Commerce appropriation
  - i) Expanding the eligibility for technology occupation student loan programs to include all lending institutions
  - j) Securing a \$20 million revenue bond for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
  - k) Increasing state funding per pupil for K-12 education
  - l) Continuing the Higher Education Roundtable flexibility, funding and accountability
3. Supported the development of five Regional IT Councils in North Dakota
4. Promoted entrepreneurship and IT industry growth through Camp Cyber Prairie, the First

Lego League, webinars, the IT Awards Program, the ITCND website and *TECHWIRE* newsletter

5. Developed an IT Inventory and Resource Guide as a tool for ITCND members
6. Worked with economic development professionals to bring Alien Technologies to Fargo
7. Established successful partnerships with:
  - Upper Great Plains Technology Conference and Trade Show
  - North Dakota Business Conference
  - North Dakota Tech Expo
  - Marketplace for Entrepreneurs
  - Regional Council Expos and Fairs
  - Business Challenge
  - North Dakota Job Service
8. Lobbied successfully in 2005 for the passage of the following:
  - a. Giving preference to a North Dakota vendor in the event that two or more bids contain identical pricing or receive identical evaluation scores
  - b. Increasing state contract opportunities for private sector businesses by providing notice of intent to registered vendors when agencies are considering making cooperative, limited competitive, noncompetitive or negotiated purchases
  - c. Decreasing barriers between tribal and non-tribal North Dakota businesses through payment guarantee to enhance contract opportunities between tribal and private sector businesses
  - d. Broadening the eligibility for the technology occupations loan program, which encourages North Dakota college graduates to remain in the state and employed in technology-related occupation following graduation
9. Published the first-ever *State of the IT Industry Guide* and continued biannual production
10. Coordinated and co-hosted a Federal IT Contracting Roundtable in Bismarck and an IT Contracting Roundtable in Washington, D.C. in 2005
11. Coordinated and co-hosted a Federal IT Contracting Open and Roundtable in 2006 in North Dakota
12. Developed a relationship as lead partner in the Great Plains Technology Conference
13. Implemented an annual statewide IT awards program recognizing the outstanding IT leaders, businesses, educators, entrepreneurs and public sector officials
14. Implemented webinars for ITCND members as an educational and networking tool
15. Lobbied successfully in 2007 for the passage of the following:
  - a. Expanding the income tax credit for research and experimental expenditures to be the highest in the nation for new business
  - b. Securing a portion of the funding for rollout of the Northern Tier Network from Fargo to Glendive, Mont.
  - c. Funding for a number of workforce initiatives that will address IT-workforce needs
  - d. Increasing funding to \$3 million for the four workforce training quadrants, which is a \$1.65 million increase
16. Completed the 2008 IT Workforce Needs Assessment

### **III. ITCND Member Benefits – The Value Proposition**

ITCND offers contacts, education, networking and more.

#### **Proposed Value Proposition**

Membership in ITCND provides a valuable link to a premier industry voice that promotes the use, growth and development of IT in North Dakota through the following:

- **Industry Voice:** ITCND is an industry voice and the leading advocate for IT growth in North Dakota.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Networking:** ITCND members can participate in procurement, educational and networking events with IT professionals from around the state.
- **IT Advocacy and Lobbying:** ITCND's public policy programs represent the members' collective opinion on issues at the federal, state and local government levels and have proven to be effective.

Other ITCND benefits include:

#### **Publications and Publicity**

Members receive a free subscription to *TECHWIRE*, the online newsletter of the state's technology industry, as well as a listing in our member directory. Members are given the elite opportunity at placement in the state online *IT Inventory and Resource Guide*, destined to be the most comprehensive source for information about the regional IT industry and an essential business tool.

#### **Knowledge-Sharing, Networking/Education and Events**

ITCND member organizations represent a gold mine of information about business and surviving entrepreneurship with sanity intact. ITCND provides a method to learn from each other. Whether it is at one of the ITCND-sponsored events or an ITCND Webinar, you're sure to further your understanding of business in this "tech-driven" world. ITCND members get reduced registration rates and access to members-only workshops and presentations.

#### **Awards and Recognition**

ITCND annually presents the State Information Technology Awards for the following areas: Outstanding Achievement in Business, Innovative Business User of Technology Award, ITCND Entrepreneur Award, Outstanding Achievement in Education, ITCND Legislative Award and the Outstanding Achievement in Digital Government Award.

## **IV. Key Components – Advancing ITCND**

Participants in the 2008 strategic planning session identified numerous initiatives which are organized below under the six ITCND goals. This outline provides a framework from which the ITCND Board of Directors can select priorities for its 2009 Work Plan and Budget. The advancement of any of these action items must directly contribute to the goals of ITCND.

Note: L = Lead, P = Partner, C = Cheerlead

### **Goal 1: Promotion and Communication**

Enhance North Dakota's IT industry and identity and serve as the voice of the North Dakota IT community

- **Promote IT**
  - Distribute the 2009 *State of the IT Industry Guide* (L)
  - Facilitate communication between K-12, higher education and North Dakota businesses (L)
    - IT Career Awareness Program
    - Adopt your school
  - Dedicate a portion of the state's marketing budget to the promotion of IT (P)
- **Implement Community Outreach**
  - Prepare success stories to share (L)
  - Provide IT information and content at local and regional conferences and meetings (rural development, colleges/universities, etc.) (P)
- **Educate Businesses/Public on Existing Infrastructure**
  - Document existing IT capabilities and determine IT demand within North Dakota in the *State of the IT Industry Guide* (L)
  - Seek opportunities to present information at national, regional and state conferences (L)
- **Foster IT Demand**
  - Encourage businesses and the state to buy technology locally (L)

### **Goal 2: Knowledge Sharing and Networking**

Provide a forum for sharing educational, business and technical experiences among North Dakota's IT community

- **Implement Educational Community Workshops and IT Education Conference (Webinars)**
  - Educate businesses on value of IT and IT network (L)
  - Support regional conferences (L-P)
  - Sponsor the ND Tech Expo (L)
  - Explore a member networking initiative (networking roundtables) (L)
- **Promote Technology Education**
  - Establish a resources/speakers/consulting bureau (L)
  - Mention ITCND's focus on education within the *State of the IT Industry Guide* (L)

- **Develop Strategic Partnerships**

- Continue the partnership with Office of Governor John Hoeven, North Dakota Job Service, North Dakota Department of Commerce and North Dakota University System on the IT workforce/training (L)

### **Goal 3: Talent Development**

Actively assist in the development of a world-class IT education system in North Dakota, create interest in IT careers in North Dakota, and support development and training of a world-class IT workforce

- **Support Student IT Programs**

- Support IT leadership development programs at all levels of education (C)
- Promote use of IT scholarship opportunities (C)
- Further develop internship opportunities (P)
- Facilitate communication between post secondary education and private sector to communicate workforce needs to aid in curriculum development (L)

- **Promote Technology Education**

- Develop and implement IT Career Awareness Program (L)
- Support post secondary education and private sector partnerships, such as the Valley City State University Enterprise University (C)

### **Goal 4: Business Development and Entrepreneurship**

Advocate a climate of IT entrepreneurial opportunity, commerce activity and industry growth

- **Improve Comprehensive IT Inventory (L)**

- Improve the current IT Inventory and Resource Guide and increase utilization (L)
  - Skills assessment
  - Business needs
  - Workforce needs and shortages
- Locate and provide links to wireless coverage maps, network maps, jobs links, job resources, surplus equipment (L)

- **Encourage IT Economic Development**

- Encourage state and federal procurement opportunities for member companies – Business Outreach Program (L)
- Implement an outreach effort with economic developers (L)
  - Develop an informational piece on IT opportunities
- Develop IT business best practices (L)
- Identify IT-related areas of excellence and barriers to success (L)

- **Develop Entrepreneurship and Capital**

- Support NDUS entrepreneurship courses and student intern programs (P)
- Support University of Mary Harold Schafer Leadership Program (C)
- Explore potential partnerships for future business plan competitions (P)

### **Goal 5: Advocacy and Lobbying**

Represent North Dakota IT interests in public policy matters and legislative affairs

- **Educate Decision Makers**

- Educate local, state, regional and national decision makers on IT challenges and opportunities (L)

- Identify state and national key influencers (L)
- **Coordinate Public Policy Efforts**
  - Implement the 2009 ITCND Legislative Agenda (L)
  - Serve as an ongoing advocate (L)
  - Expand to a national level (L)
  - Facilitate member issue forums (L)
  - Develop IT-issue white papers (L)

#### **Goal 6: Infrastructure Development**

Work for affordable access to state-of-the-art voice, video and data service for all North Dakotans

- **Support Funding for K-12 IT Deployment (C)**
  - Encourage ongoing state funding for K-20 grant for technology investments (C)
- **Affordable and Reliable Broadband Access (C)**
  - Encourage development of affordable and reliable broadband access throughout the state (C)

## **V. Framework for Success – ITCND’s Structure**

ITCND has an executive committee, task forces, special committees and staff to implement initiatives that further the mission and goals of ITCND.

### **ITCND Board of Directors**

The ITCND Board of Directors is the policy-making body of ITCND. The board is also responsible for the control and conduct of the affairs and property of ITCND.

The position of director is not an honorary one. Board members are expected to contribute to and participate in board and other ITCND activities. In addition to participating in board meetings, potential areas of service include:

- Recruiting new members
- Serving on committees and task forces
- Contacting legislators and/or congressional delegation
- Working to improve the effectiveness of the Regional IT Council in their area

### **ITCND Executive Committee**

The ITCND Executive Committee is comprised of the following:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary/Treasurer

*The ITCND Executive Committee shall appoint individuals to work with them and/or the staff on implementing specific programs and activities on major issues including workforce development and education, business development and entrepreneurship, as well as membership, the IT Awards Program, and board nominations.*

### **Proposed ITCND Committees**

- Public Policy (*Advocacy and Lobbying*)
- Task Forces/Ad Hoc Committees

### **ITCND Executive Director**

The executive director is responsible for the daily operation and management of ITCND. Duties include keeping any necessary records required by the board of directors and reporting information to board members as requested.

### **New Responsibilities**

2005

- Business Outreach Program
- *State of the IT Industry Guide*

2006

- Business Outreach Program – IT Open
- *State of the IT Industry Guide – 2007 Edition*
- IT Business Resource Guide improvements

2007

- Development of IT Career Awareness Program
- Website redesign
- Workshop content and speakers for GPTC

2008

- IT Workforce Needs Assessment
- *State of IT Industry Guide – 2009 Edition*

## **VI. ITCND Operations and Budget – Achieving the Vision**

ITCND has an infinite set of choices of where to spend its finite resources (staff, time, volunteer time and money). Recognizing we cannot do everything, a system must exist for identifying priorities and structuring programs and directing resources to these programs. In general terms, the planning and budgeting process involved strategic planning, organizational planning and strategic allocation of resources.

### **Strategic Planning**

The ITCND Board of Directors is responsible for developing the ITCND strategic plan. This plan frames the long-term objectives of the organization and provides the key components of the annual work plan.

### **Annual Work Plan**

The staff and executive committee draft the annual work plan, which is submitted to the ITCND Board of Directors for review and final approval. The new plan is implemented Jan.1 of each year.

### **Budget Development**

The development of the budget parallels the development of the annual work plan. The staff prepares the annual budget for review by the secretary/treasurer for presentation to the executive committee. The executive committee presents the annual budget to the board of directors for approval.

General budget philosophy:

1. The budget is a goal-attainment tool
2. It requires a clear set of organization priorities to be effective
3. A surplus is budgeted