BCCS Pulse Newsletter

A newsletter of the Bureau of Communication and Computer Services

Tips When Calling the IT Customer Service Center

Your call will be answered by one of our Service Desk Technicians. If the Technician is unable to answer your question, a Remedy Incident Ticket will be created and assigned to one of our Shared Service areas for resolution.

The Remedy incident number can be used to track the repair. It is very important to have specific information ready and available to give to the Help Desk analyst when you call in an order to track your repair accurately.

When calling the Service Desk for assistance, be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Name
2. Phone number
3. Agency
4. Current location
5. Product name & version #
6. Any error codes
7. Is the problem intermittent or continuous
8. How many people are impacted by the problem
9. System description & property tag of hardware

STATE OF ILLINOIS
CENTRAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES
C61868

**New Menu Options
CSC/CMC
800-366-8768**

The CMS Customer Service Center implemented new menu options in April to streamline operations and better utilize resources. It is important to BCCS that you always reach a live agent; so agents are cross trained to handle password resets for all agencies in order to eliminate the voice mail box option. Our new menu options create a better and more user-friendly system for our diversified base of end users.

Option 1: "For all computer related issues such as hardware, software, or email, press 1."
Sub-Options:
- Password Resets Sub-Option 1
- DHS Sub-Option 2
- HFS +Digital PKI Certificates Sub-Option 3
- CMS, DCEO, REV, DOT & DPH Sub-Option 4
- DES, FPR or DOI Sub-Option 5
- EPA, DNR & AG Sub-Option 6
- Other agencies, boards, commissions & universities Sub Option 7
- Ethics training & support Sub Option 8
- Repeat menu options Sub Option 9

Option 2: "For help with the Illinois Century Network or to reach the Communications Management Center, press 2."

Option 3: "For videoconferencing services, press 3."

Option 4: "For all telecommunications repairs and support issues, press 4."
Sub-Options:
- IWIN Services Sub-Option 1
- Wireless: Cellular, Paging, Blackberry Repair and ESN Changes Sub-Option 2
- Data Circuits and other Data Communications Sub-Option 3
- Telephone Repairs (non-Wireless) Sub-Option 4

Option 5: "To purchase telecommunications products or sign up for telecom services, press 5."
Sub-Options:
- IWIN Services Sub-Option 1
- Wireless: Cellular, Paging and Blackberries Sub-Option 2
- Data Circuits and other Data Technologies Sub-Option 3
- Telephone Equipment & Services (non-Wireless) Sub-Option 4
- Video – New Service or to Change Existing Service Sub-Option 5

Option 6: "To repeat this menu, press 6."

BCCS EPASS Team

State Agencies Realize Cost Savings

- Eliminates the hassle and expense of paper and printing supplies associated with processing pay stubs.

- Reduced postage to mail pay stubs.

- Reduced time and costs required to produce pay stubs and lost pay stubs.

- Streamlined workflow and increased productivity by payroll and administrative personnel who manage pay stub activities.

- Reduced storage costs. No more paper documents to store.

New Service Enterprise Fax Service

- Electronic Fax Client

- Cost Effective Replacement for Fax Machines

- High Capacity

- No Fax Phone Number Changes For Downstate

- Redundant System Automatic Failover

Green Government Awards Electronic Pay Stub System EPASS
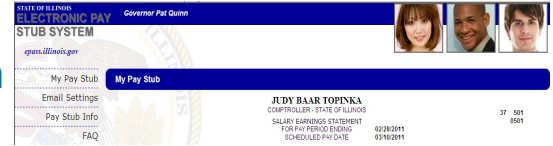
The Sustainable Government Symposium, the Illinois Green Government Coordinating Council presented this year's Green Government Awards in recognition of outstanding environmental leadership and innovative sustainability accomplishments by Illinois state agencies last December.

The Council is charged with coordinating state policies and programs that reduce pollution and integrate resource conservation into government operations. The Green Government Awards program reflects the successful steps that state agencies are taking to ensure a greener Illinois.

BCCS was recognized in the category of "Green Information Technology" for the Electronic Pay Stub System (EPASS) application, which delivers pay stubs electronically. BCCS implemented EPASS in order to eliminate the costs associated with mailing paper stubs to employees every two weeks. EPASS is a secure, easy to-use web-based tool that utilizes encryption and password management to ensure the protection of sensitive pay stub information. EPASS also maintains historical pay stub information for seven years from the date of implementation.

EPASS is currently being used by eighteen state agencies. BCCS will continue to roll out EPASS in FY12. The agencies using EPASS have: eliminated the hassle and expense of paper and printing supplies; reduced costs of postage, materials, and time required to reproduce lost pay stubs; streamlined workflow and increased productivity by administrative personnel; and reduced storage costs by eliminating paper copies. These savings yield environmental benefits in terms of reduced paper consumption, energy use, and transportation fuel use.

To learn how EPASS will reduce your payroll processing costs while providing a valuable service to your employees, contact **Valerie Bolinger at 217-558-0629**.

Enterprise Fax Service

CMS/BCCS is proud to announce a new faxing service that will be available for our customers on July 1, 2011. The Enterprise Fax Service (EFS) provides BCCS hosted email customers with the ability to send and/or receive fax documents from their desktop via Outlook or electronic fax client. The service can be used as cost effective replacement for dedicated fax machines.

Benefits of the Enterprise Fax Service include:

- **Low Cost** - Reduction/elimination of existing fax machines/line and associated maintenance costs.
- **High Capacity** - Large outbound faxes jobs can utilize the multiple telephone lines concurrently which reduces the time to send.
- **No Fax Phone Number Changes** - In most cases BCCS can transfer an existing fax to the new system, so there is no need to update fax number, change business cards, or notify customers for downstate.

Redundant System, unlike a standalone fax machine the redundant infrastructure of EFS provides automatic failover in case of hardware or phone line failure. Applicable rates are as follows, $5 per month for each registered user which includes 50 free inbound and/or outbound faxes per month. Each additional fax page after the 50 is billed at $.02 per fax page for inbound and $.08 per fax page for outbound. Customer IT Coordinators will need to submit Enterprise Service Request (ESR) forms via email to the BCCS IT Service Desk to request service.

Paging Technology

Paging is a technology that is rapidly becoming obsolete. Compared with other wireless options such as cell phones, smart phones and push-to-talk devices, the once useful pager is becoming a technological relic.

The current USA Mobility statewide paging contract expires June 30, 2012, with no renewal options. Under its terms, third party paging services may (or may not) be available after towers are decommissioned. When available, the current monthly cost for third party pagers are $11.00 for numeric and $17.50 for alphanumeric service. Going forward, there is absolutely no guarantee that any paging coverage, at any cost, will be available in many areas throughout the state; thus, the CSC does not recommend any continued reliance on paging service.

The best option for replacing pagers is a cell phone. A flat rate plan is $7.00 per month and $.08/minute for airtime. If desired, the device can be programmed to disallow outbound calls or restrict it to call only chosen numbers. Text packages and push-to-talk are also available and vary by carrier and size of package. In considering alternative wireless solutions, the CSC can assist with testing the cellular coverage in multiple locations both inside and outside building locations.

In order to implement alternative solutions, you must carefully evaluate your existing wireless needs and develop a plan to migrate current paging users to other devices. The CSC can provide paging usage reports to help in the evaluation process and pricing of proposed alternative services.

Consider and answer these questions:

1. How many pagers are currently in use?
2. Does each user have a genuine "critical" need for a mobile device?
3. Which alternate technology will meet each user's needs?

In some areas, the vendors may need to conduct further coverage testing and, where cost permits, make needed facility modifications. If a building modification is not feasible, Betty Russell will work with a coordinator on a case-by-case basis to develop other, creative solutions. All testing requires advance planning and facility modifications require contracts and time to implement; thus the earlier your needs are identified, the sooner we can assist you in solidifying plans and implementing solutions to meet your needs.

Please contact Betty Russell by August 1, 2011, if your agency needs are critical and dependent on paging services or if you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter.

Betty Russell
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217-785-4441
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Computer Threats

Malware, worms, and Trojan horses: These spread by email, instant messaging, malicious websites, and infected non-malicious websites. Some websites will automatically download the malware without the user's knowledge or intervention. This is known as a "drive-by download." Other methods will require the users to click on a link or button.

Botnets and zombies: A *botnet*, short for robot network, is an aggregation of compromised computers that are connected to a central "controller." The compromised computers are often referred to as "zombies." These threats will continue to proliferate as the attack techniques evolve and become available to a broader audience, with less technical knowledge required to launch successful attacks. Botnets designed to steal data are improving their encryption capabilities and thus becoming more difficult to detect.

"Scareware" – fake security software warnings: This type of scam can be particularly profitable for cyber criminals, as many users believe the pop-up warnings telling them their system is infected and are lured into downloading and paying for the special software to "protect" their system.

Source: www.us-cert.gov

Data Center Interesting Facts

- There are 2000 servers housed in the Data Center - 1200 of these servers are virtualized

- Server virtualization has reduced the amount of floor space used by physical servers by 92% statewide

- Server virtualization and blade server technology have reduced power consumption by 77%

- The state's mainframe computers originally resided on the 6th floor of the Stratton Office Building

- The Data Center was built in 1979

- The Data Center is 30,000 square feet in size

- The concrete walls for the Data Center were built to withstand winds up to 150 miles per hour

- 1.3 megawatts of power is used hourly

Virtualized Blade Server Technology

Inside the CMS/BCCS Data Center
Technology at it's Finest

Did you know that prior to opening the Central Computing Facility (CCF) at our current location in 1979, our mainframe computers resided on the 6th floor of the Stratton Office Building.

Virtualized Blade Servers

Considered state-of-the-art, occupying 30,000 square feet with a roof surface to match, the Data Center remains current with technology while incorporating green practices whenever practical. When we moved to virtualized blade servers in 2007, we were able to use the existing cooling pipes original to the mainframes to provide cooling to the water-chilled racks.

We consume 1.3 megawatts power/hour which is equivalent to the amount of power used by 400 to 500 average sized homes. Although we have increased the number of servers and data we support and maintain by 20-40% over the last several years, our overall power usage has been relatively flat due primarily to virtualization technology. We house 2000 servers, 1200 of which are virtualized, and 4 mainframes. We follow the n + 1 rule of keeping an extra one of everything on hand just in case. We have a spare air conditioning unit, chiller, generator, ups system and extra pumps all in an effort to ensure the availability of our building and its major sub-systems at all times.

Our building with its substantial concrete walls was built to withstand winds up to 150 miles per hour. We have 24 x 7 coverage by staff representing three functional areas of CMS: Computer Operations, Facilities Management and Security. As times have changed and technology has evolved, we have participated in engineering studies to help guide our decisions to update and maintain our building and its equipment. Gone are the days of computer operators in winter coats. With the newer water chilled racks, we can keep the thermostat at a more comfortable and cost

24 X 7 Coverage, Computer Operations

effective temperature. Where we once had storage silos that technicians had to enter to resolve issues and mount tapes, we are removing the silos, freeing up floor space and installing disk drives. Our building is a living and thriving history of data center technology that evolved with the times.