

**PIERCE COUNTY WISCONSIN**  
**INFORMATION SERVICES**  
**412 W. KINNE STREET, P.O. BOX 120**  
**ELLSWORTH, WI 54011**  
**715-273-1122**



**Janet Huppert – Director**

**Information Services Department**  
**2021 Annual Report**

To the Honorable Pierce County Board of Supervisors:

The mission of the Pierce County Information Services Department is to provide the appropriate computer tools, communications equipment, and technological services to enable county employees to operate at maximum efficiency within affordable technologies while remaining compatible with the operating environment of the networked computer systems. The Information Services Department is also responsible for processing the bi-weekly payroll, processing and printing all county checks, other county financial system processing, programming as needed for various departmental systems and updating and growing the county web page. During 2021 the Information Services Committee, which is the standing committee for the Information Services Department, was made up of County Board members Michael Kahlow, Jon Aubart and Jeff Bjork. The citizen members were Mary-Alice Muraski (1/1/21 - 4/26/21), Torey Kauth (5/26/21 - current), Jeff Olson (1/1/21 - 8/17/21) and Liz Gunderson (9/28/21 - current).

The Pierce County computer infrastructure as of December 31, 2021 included 139 desktop PCs, 213 laptops, 21 Chromebooks, 8 tablets and 92 printers. Pierce County also had 18 servers with a mix of operating systems. The Information Services Department also supports the county cell phones through 2 cell carriers. At the end of 2021 the county had 137 smartphones, 7 flip cell phones and 40 air cards/wireless cell connections.

Information Services supports a wide variety of software applications. In addition to the Microsoft core applications that people are running there are departmental specific applications in almost every department, several state systems, a county financial package, a county imaging package, a county email system which includes shared county calendars and several applications that have been programmed by Pierce County employees.

A summary of the 2021 financial statement for Information Services is as follows:

<u>Budgeted Amount</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
\$813,936	\$801,075	\$12,861

Employees of the Information Services Department:

Janet Huppert - Director  
Steve Gustafson – Network Administrator  
Jean Behringer – Programmer/Analyst

Tim Anderson – Lead Computer Technician  
Craig Hager – Computer Technician

The main departmental goals established for 2021 were:

- ◆ Create and maintain an environment of continuous improvement and innovation
- ◆ Enhance the Cybersecurity Plan for the County
- ◆ Implement the 2021 Information Services department budget

### Overview of the Year

As much as people hoped COVID would be in our rearview mirror by this point it isn't. 2021 was a full year of dealing with all that came with keeping the County going during a pandemic. Remote meetings and masking are a standard part of County life. In addition to COVID the bad actors that play in the cyber sphere have been hard at it and aren't making life regarding technology any easier. Throughout all we have been through this past year the business of the County continued and overall things continued to move forward.

The Information Services department is well versed in remote support now and used it often to either stay out of people's offices or to assist people that were working remotely. The beginning of 2021 had the office physically split due to COVID recommendations. Then the supply chain issues hit. Getting hardware in a timely manner had a higher price tag. The IS staff is very good at coming up with creative ways to keep things going since there is so much uncertainty regarding what we can get and when. The pace of work for the Information Services department didn't slow down during 2021. The Information Services department staff did an excellent job of keeping everything going this past year during rather trying times as COVID fatigue is setting in.

As well as implementing new things we have kept what we have going and stayed within the budget. In addition to the end user daily support we did, the Information Services Department was responsible for researching, ordering and implementing several projects throughout the county in 2021. The highlights of the past year are as follows.

### Software

- Office 2019 was purchased and installed on roughly half of County machines in the second year of a two year project to upgrade all Office licenses due to end of life for Office 2010.
- Adobe licenses also needed to be upgraded due to age and direction that Adobe is taking. 18 Adobe licenses were upgraded and loaded. An evaluation was then done on Foxit and it was decided to use that as the County pdf editor for the other 22 licenses that needed to be upgraded.
- We continue to be vigilant regarding viruses, malware and spyware. We have current defenses on our perimeter but occasionally something gets through that shouldn't and it is dealt with in a timely manner.
- We continue to support all departments with their departmental software packages with things like keeping patches current, doing updates and resolving network issues. We continue to modify and support shared databases as well as create new ones as requested. Timely patching is done on servers as well as major upgrades on countywide applications like the county financial system.
- We have a very active and timely county web page and county intranet which include up to date calendars, agendas, minutes, employment opportunities and other county items of interest. We also provide an avenue for county municipalities to have a web presence.

### Hardware

- We evaluated several firewalls and have installed a new one to strengthen our cyber posture. In addition to a new VPN platform this will also allow us to roll out MFA.
- We installed a 1 GB internet circuit to replace a 250 Mbps internet circuit partially due to all the remote work people are now doing.
- 61 new Verizon phones were deployed. Most of them were due to their age and upgrade eligibility but a few were new lines of services.
- We decided to change our process for hard drive destruction and a cruncher was purchased.

- Access points were installed in the Round Barn, grandstand and outside vendor area before the 2021 County Fair.
- 18 desktops, 20 laptops, 1 iPad, 11 webcams, 27 monitors, and 4 printers were purchased, configured and set up for end users. 1 server were also purchased, configured and installed. Everything that has lived its useful life is responsibly recycled through our Solid Waste Department and tracked. Equipment is also repurposed where it makes sense.
- The Information Services department maintains all county technology related hardware which includes troubleshooting and performing repairs when necessary.

### Contracts and Planning

- One of the Computer Tech positions was reclassified to a Lead Computer Tech position.
- 7 DocuSign accounts were pulled in to one County one.
- Contracts were worked on and are in place for the myAvatar NX and GCS software upgrades in 2022.
- In addition to helping the rest of the County work as remotely as possible, we had to come up with a departmental plan so we could continue to support everyone else if our staff got COVID. We came up with remote rotations to minimize exposure, so we always had everything covered.
- Contracts are all reviewed annually to make sure the County is getting the best pricing on all technology related goods and services such as telephony.

### Miscellaneous

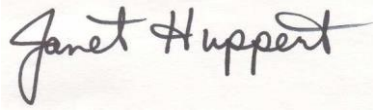
- We updated password rules based on the National Institute of Standards and Technology guidelines.
- Unfortunately, another two of our 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors had data breaches that affected us. None of our data was compromised but there was additional work we needed to do as a result of their breaches.
- We did the activations and setups for 35 new employees and deactivations for 32 employees.
- We helped the following move to new offices - 4 people in Administration, 3 in Corporation Counsel and 3 in Court Services. We also helped move several other people due to office moves internally.
- We got 3 new conference rooms and a new County Board room set up with technology for remote meetings.
- Pierce County continues to be an active member of the GIPAW group which is the state of Wisconsin technology group for county and municipal government as well as NACo (National Association of Counties) County Tech Xchange. NACo had some extremely good scenario-based training that I took advantage of as it was free to the member counties. The relationships that have been built over the years by attending the GIPAW meetings with my counterparts in other counties are a great benefit to Pierce County to see what other counties are doing to keep moving things forward.

The main proposed departmental goals for 2022 are:

- ◆ Create and maintain an environment of continuous improvement and innovation
- ◆ Enhance the Cybersecurity Plan for the County
- ◆ Implement the 2022 Information Services department budget which includes a number of big software upgrades this year.

The Information Services Department will continue to provide a stable high-speed network, the appropriate equipment (both hardware and software) needed by each employee for them to be able to do their county job and have staff available to help county employees as needed in a timely fashion. We are continuing to try to replace about 1/5 of the total computers annually in order to keep our computers at a level that they will be able to run current software and work with other peripherals. We will continue to move technology forward to increase efficiencies across the county. Please contact me if you have questions or need additional information regarding the Information Services Department operations. I may be reached at 715-273-1122 or huppert@co.pierce.wi.us .

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Janet Huppert" in a cursive script.

Janet Huppert  
Director of Information Services  
March 16, 2022