

PO Box 27834  
Austin, TX 78755  
Phone 512.474.1827  
Fax 512.692.2651  
[www.tasscc.org](http://www.tasscc.org)

**October 10, 2016**

**Excellence in state government was recently highlighted at the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communication (TASSCC) annual conference** in Galveston, Texas August 7<sup>th</sup> through August 10<sup>th</sup>. 600 members and associate members were in attendance. During the conference, TASSCC presented several awards to recognize excellence and innovation in Texas public sector IT services.

**TASSCC** recognizes excellence in IT in several areas, including the TASSCC Excellence Awards and the Rising Star Award for outstanding leadership and service to the State of Texas. In addition, TASSCC presents the President's Award for IT Excellence to an individual who has distinguished themselves with their leadership and dedication to the public sector. Five state agencies and five IT leaders were recognized as part of the 2016 TASSCC Awards Program.

**The TASSCC Excellence Awards** recognize projects that showcase innovative application of leading-edge computing and/or communications technologies. This year TASSCC presented four Excellence Awards to state agencies. Nominated projects must result in demonstrated improvements to internal operations, customer service or communication. Projects must be fully implemented and deliver the services described.

**The TASSCC Excellence Award for High Value Impact was presented to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles for webDEALER.** webDEALER is a one-of-a-kind web based application developed by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) which provides end-to-end visibility for title application processing. It improves the vehicle titling process by providing real-time verification of registration and title data while eliminating the need for vehicle dealers to physically transport documents to the offices of county tax assessor-collectors. Moreover, webDEALER performs full fee calculations eliminating both the possibility of transactions being returned for incorrect fees and any need to issue refunds.

**The TASSCC Excellence Award – President's Choice was presented to the Texas Department of Public Safety for the State Police Unified Reporting System (SPURS).** The State Police Unified Reporting System (SPURS) is one of the first enterprise systems implemented at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to consolidate and incorporate all relevant data from multiple law enforcement divisions into a unified platform. SPURS allows approximately 1600 DPS employees from multiple law enforcement divisions to use a common platform for entering and managing case data thus enhancing workflow management, optimized data sharing and increased productivity across these divisions. As a result, multiple law enforcement divisions at DPS now have visibility to previously unavailable data across the enterprise, resulting in improved investigation outcomes.

**The TASSCC Excellence Award for Collaboration was presented to Texas Natural Resources Information System and Texas Department of Information Resources for the Texas Imagery Service Initiative.** The Texas Imagery Service initiative is a collaboration between the State of Texas and Google to provide high quality, continuous 6-inch natural color imagery resolution for the state. The pilot project was directed by Texas Natural Resources Information System (TNRIS) and Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) in partnership with three other state agencies. The on-demand mapping service is available to all public organizations (i.e. state, regional and local governments) and provides a current and consistent data source while offering the highest resolution imagery available for any statewide program. The solution is based on open-standard sources and can be incorporated into a wide variety of Geographic Information System (GIS) software and web mapping applications. Google hosts the imagery service on its Google Cloud Platform. In addition to gaining access to high resolution imagery at a fraction of the cost, the service reduces the need to pay large storage costs for serving terabytes of data by eliminating the need for each public organization to host the high resolution imagery.

**The TASSCC Excellence Award for Innovative or Inventive Project was presented to the Department of State Health Services for the TX WIC Mosaic Multi-State Collaboration.** This project is the design of a cross-state collaboration – a multi-vendor, modernized, government cloud-based WIC Management Information System (MIS) and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) solution being led by the state of Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). This total system solution is known as the Mosaic System.

**The TASSCC President's Award for IT Excellence was presented to Eric Obermier with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.** Mr. Obermier has established himself as an indispensable part of his agency's business operations and advancements. His eagerness to engage with stakeholders, state and agency leadership, and staff has resulted in an innovative yet balanced approach to the information technology issues facing the agency. His constant pursuit of the best possible solution to a given problem, coupled with his work ethic and drive, has enabled his agency to make a myriad of advances in support for both businesses and government as well as service to the motoring public of Texas. Beyond efforts that fall within his role at DMV, Eric displays leadership outside the agency by chairing the Information Technology Leadership Committee (ITLC) that provides governance in the Data Center Services (DCS) program overseen by the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR). One of Eric's notable accomplishments is the successful cultivation of a cultural transformation within the Information Technology Services Division of DMV, achieving the customer-driven focus so often sought after, but not always realized, in today's data-driven world.

**The TASSCC Rising Star Award for 2016 was presented to four exceptional emerging leaders in state government, Karla Rodriguez with the Office of the Attorney General – Child Support, Eric Weigel with the University of Texas at Austin Information Technology Services – Systems, Paul Brown with the Texas Department of Public Safety, and John Cody with the Teacher Retirement System.**

Karla Rodriguez has worked for the State of Texas for more than 25 years and was involved in development of the initial Child Support system (T1) in the early 1980s. She

is a natural leader and leads by example. She communicates regularly and seeks to understand in order to solve complex problems. Ms. Rodriguez has an amazing attitude and strives to always improve herself, their team and the processes they use every day. She is a go-getter and truly tries to understand complex issues in order to solve problems the best way possible. Karla Rodriguez is an invaluable asset to the organization and to the T2 project. The project benefits from her exceptional work ethic and leadership abilities.

Eric Weigel successfully led the way in forging a collaborative relationship with the Purchasing unit at UT Austin, paving the way for a new technical architecture to efficiently be established on campus. Establishing himself as a reliable and trustworthy steward with Purchasing led him to serve as the project liaison to that department -- which proved pivotal in the execution of a new technical architecture. This work enabled future purchases to be executed in a more streamlined manner. Mr. Weigel is a perfect example of a rising star at UT Austin. He exemplifies excellence in IT and the practices he has established at a micro and macro level will continue to positively influence IT Services for years to come.

Paul Brown dazzles everyone with the quality and quantity of his work. His job knowledge is vast and his spot-on execution has positively impacted the Texas Department of Public Safety in countless ways. He has led the DPS "TXMAP" Team to develop and implement numerous new features and creative enhancements every month for many years. Due to his outstanding technical ability and willingness to pitch in wherever assistance is needed, Paul has become the go-to guy for challenging projects and troublesome applications that have no "owner". Paul's dedication and work ethic are astounding. He handles incredibly high workloads, competing demands for his expertise, uncountable interruptions with care, technical prowess, and thoroughness.

John Cody has not only distinguished himself as an outstanding software developer, but, consistent with TASSCC's mission, he has educated others and helped them become better developers. John is an integral part of the technical team at TRS and his contributions are significant. He has dedicated his career to making IT better in state government (both at UT Austin and TRS) not only through his own development but by leading, educating, and mentoring others.

**The TASSCC** mission is to advance education and networking among Texas public sector IT professionals. TASSCC's full members include state agencies and state institutions of higher education, while associate members are primarily companies involved in computing and communications. TASSCC produces three education conferences and participates in numerous community service events throughout the year.