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— Lou Adamson,
Legislative Information Systems Coordinator,
South Dakota Legislature

PRUDENCE IN PIERRE

Gateway® M275 notebook-to-tablet PCs help legislators save time and resources while improving productivity.

Pierre, the capital of South Dakota, is a city steeped in tradition and history. Since 1889, when the Dakotas were separated, the legislative process had remained largely the same. That changed in 1997 as the Legislature underwent a bold transformation to help it keep up with a high-tech world.

Under the direction of information systems coordinator Lou Adamson, the Legislature approved and installed a wireless network on the third and fourth floors of the Capitol building. Constructed between 1905 and 1910, the South Dakota Capitol building is an elegant maze of brass, stone and marble — and also not very conducive to a hard-wired network. Wireless was the only way to go.

With the network in place, South Dakota lawmakers received desktop PCs in 1999. However, they quickly concluded that notebook PCs would be more useful. In 2001, Gateway® notebooks were introduced to the Legislature, and they were a tremendous success. Recently the South Dakota Legislature advanced once more, this time to Gateway® M275 notebook-to-tablet PCs.

A NEW LEASE

Prior to 1997, the South Dakota Legislature did things the old-fashioned way — on paper. It was at Adamson's insistence that the Legislature was brought into a more modern, technology-driven environment. Fortunately Gateway offered solutions that were both powerful and affordable.

“We had no computers. There was no technology for the legislators whatsoever,” Adamson recalled. “I promoted the fact that we needed to get information to legislators more quickly.”

“We acquired 108 notebook-to-tablet PCs on a two-year lease with Gateway,” Adamson said. “Every legislator now has a [Gateway M275] tablet computer, and all the legislative information is stored on those computers. They all feature Intel processors and the complete Microsoft® Office suite as well as e-mail and Internet access through the wireless network. The legislators can take the computers home during the interim and access the legislative information through the Internet.”

Bringing new technology to South Dakota state government proved to be a smooth and welcomed transition.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

AGENCY:

South Dakota State Legislature

MISSION:

By modernizing the traditional lawmaking practices, the South Dakota Legislature is better able to represent constituent interests efficiently, decisively and fairly.

TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVE:

Eliminate wasteful practices, in terms of both time and resources, to increase the effectiveness and productivity of both houses of the state Legislature.

GATEWAY SOLUTION:

Since 2001, the South Dakota Legislature has used Gateway laptops, and now the Gateway M275 notebook-

to-tablet PCs, to reduce dependence on paper and develop more efficient and modern lawmaking procedures.

ROI:

The South Dakota Legislature has found that the Gateway solution allows better communication and quicker access to important legislative data.

“With the [Gateway M275] tablet, I can take notes and it is easy to store information. I don't have to dig through file cabinets and I don't have to carry so much junk around. I love it.”

— State Rep. Deb Peters, South Dakota

Virtually all of the elected representatives in the House and the Senate agree the Gateway M275s with Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology¹ and Intel® Pentium® M Processors — and previously the Gateway notebooks — helped create a much more effective governing body.

HOMEGROWN SOLUTIONS

The South Dakota Legislature chose Gateway for a number of reasons. Prior to 1998, Gateway was headquartered in Sioux City, S.D. Having been an important part of the South Dakota economy put Gateway at the top of the list.

In addition, Gateway offered South Dakota legislators the most features, the highest reliability and the best price among all the competitors. Adamson said that overall, Gateway was simply the best choice when it came time to acquire notebooks.

“The Gateway M275s seemed more durable and lighter weight,” said Adamson. “Another reason we went with the Gateway notebook-to-tablet PCs is because the CD/DVD drive, screen and computer are all one unit. Our legislators can just carry one piece around and they have everything they need.”

The South Dakota Legislature realized a number of benefits since switching to Gateway M275s. Perhaps most important is the fact that the Legislature is no longer drowning in a sea of paperwork, journals and notes. The lawmaking process generates plenty of paper that can get out of control. Gateway technology reduced the paperwork that weighed the government process down.

“All this paper ... it killed many trees,” Adamson noted. “We used to have bill books and daily journals at every legislator's desk. This was the first year we did away with that. We eliminated 95 journals (158,175 pages) and 380 bill books (173,280 pages). Now the legislators are accessing the information on the [Gateway M275] tablet computers.

State Rep. Deb Peters agrees the reduction in paperwork has tremendously benefited the Legislature.

“I don't have to carry around as much paper,” said Peters. “Not having to carry around binders and folders is so much more efficient. With the [Gateway M275] tablet, I can take notes and it is easy to store information. I don't have dig through file cabinets and I don't have to carry so much junk around. I love it.”

LEARNING CURVE

Using the Gateway M275 with Intel Centrino Mobile Technology is a major technological advancement for the South Dakota Legislature. In



The Gateway® M275 with Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology helps state legislators work wire-free anywhere in the Capitol building.

fact, students from Dakota State University helped provide training for the Legislature.

“We had two students come for the first two weeks of session,” said Adamson. “This is our first year with the tablets, so there was a learning curve. I put one student with the House and one with the Senate. It was wonderful. The Dakota State University students were a godsend. Being able to respond to any legislator in a timely and personalized manner is a real benefit to the legislative process.”

With the reliability of Gateway machines, Adamson doesn't have to worry about anything other than making sure legislators know how to operate their computers.

“Overall, the Gateway tablets are wonderful,” Adamson said. “The personal help desk offered by Gateway is the way to go. Each computer has its own 'help desk' assigned to it. If something breaks, I send Gateway an e-mail and tell them what is broken. Gateway sends me a box and I put the computer in and send it back. They fix the problem and send the box back. Sometimes the box is back in two days.”

But Adamson has rarely had to use this feature. Of the few service calls she had to make this year, none was due to equipment malfunctions.

“They are working very well,” she said.



MOBILE TECHNOLOGY



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