

# 2014-2015 Annual Report



Rollie Hawk  
Chief Information Officer  
County of Union, Illinois

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## Introduction

As my second year as Chief Information Officer is completed, my role within Union County Government continues to evolve. I strive to constantly balance between my vision for Information Technology and Communications and the current needs of the offices I support. While I can't always focus on projects as exclusively as I would like, I believe my willingness to provide much-needed support to other offices in a timely manner has helped each to meet their statutory requirements on many occasions.

My goal for this document is threefold. First, I want to review where we've been and some accomplishments of my office. Second, I want to provide an overview for where we are at this point in time. Finally, I want to lay out my vision for not only the future of my office but some specifics for others and for the County as a whole and the steps that I recommend we make priorities for the coming years to reach that vision.

While my role in Union County is an appointed one and is in no way meant to detract from the essential roles of our elected officials and other appointed officials, when fully utilized, my office is able to reduce the burden in other offices by providing specialized expertise. This allows for more informed decision making at the office level in the areas of Information Technology and Communications as well as a closer eye on spending to assist the Board of Commissioners in its mission to assure proper spending of the taxpayers' money.

I would also like to say that I hope that over time, more offices begin to produce annual reports or even more frequent reports of this type. There is a story to be told about Union County Government that the taxpayers deserve to hear and it is, in my opinion, our responsibility to share that story.

## 2014-2015 Accomplishments

### NG 9-1-1 Going Live

My office had the privilege of being involved with the implementation of Union County 911's NG 9-1-1 System. It was a marathon day that will long be remembered and a great opportunity to work with both staff and vendors, tapping into their years of emergency services experience.

### Trainings Attended

One of the great value-adds about our partnership in the ICRMT is their many free trainings offered to member counties. I encourage all members of Union County management to participate in their trainings.



Likewise, the Attorney General's yearly trainings on FOIA and OMA are an incredible resource that I encourage not on Union County personnel to attend but also members of the public.

- ICRMT OMA, FOIA and Liability Training – 4 hours – October 21, 2014
- Attorney General's 2015 Open Meetings Act Training – 2 hours – March 25, 2015
- Attorney General's 2015 Freedom of Information Act Training – 2 hours – May 1, 2015
- ICRMT Employment Law Training – 4 hours – May 11, 2015

### Panic Switch at Front Desk

In addition to being a safety feature that adds to the security of this courthouse, this was an excellent example of multiple departments working together for an overall county improvement. By utilizing the skills of our custodial staff in running wires through the building and ordering the wiring ourselves, we were able to keep costs for this project extremely low. By having our security system vendor down on a day when they were already in the area, we were also able to keep travel and labor expenses low. The original quote was \$1000 in labor alone; these efforts resulted in a total project cost of around \$600.

This project was an excellent example of the cost savings available by utilizing our internal experts and promoting cooperation between departments. Having custodians willing to pitch in on these kinds of projects has been helpful in several situations over the last couple of years.

New Ambulance Server – In the midst of planning for a new Ambulance server for the new 12-lead system, the existing Ambulance server had a catastrophic failure. I was able to move quickly and get a functional temporary system in place within hours.

Later, coordinating with the Ambulance Service and their vendor, we were able to get a system in place by which vital stats from the ambulance can be transmitted to the server. That server then rebroadcasts that data to the hospital they are headed to, either by fax or email. This sort of telemetry makes available more details for the medical staff so that as soon as the ambulance arrives everyone is up to speed.



Repairs to Fuel System – Several months ago, there was a failure in the fuel system that resulted in all of the pump data being wiped out such as keys and departments. By taking known data and converting it to an electronic script, I was able to successfully reprogram the pump with key information in a matter of hours. County Engineer Kevin Grammer said that doing this manually at the pump would normally take days to complete.

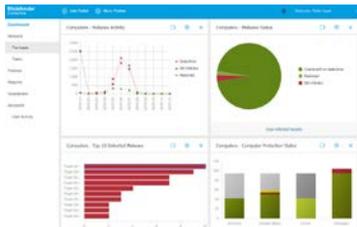
Two Jury Trials – Technology is currently assisting our prosecutors in the courtroom in two important ways. The first is by presenting exhibits such as crime scene diagrams, autopsy photos and maps in a more convenient and powerful way to the jury on a large screen rather than printouts. The second is by

using demonstratives to present more stale information such as text messages or call logs in a cleaner and more powerful way on a screen. I have had the pleasure of assisting the State's Attorney's office in two jury trials in the last year, not only helping to prepare exhibits and demonstratives but also providing assistance in preparing the courtroom for whatever technological needs exist for each trial. This is the kind of service that many law offices pay hundreds of dollars an hour to utilize.

### Moving Sheriff's Office to Smart Phones

As the Sheriff's deputies began using mobile computing years ago, 4G technology was not in place in our area and therefore both a cell phone and an Internet device of some sort were needed. That meant paying around \$40 a month for a hotspot and another \$40 for a flip phone. By switching to smart phones and utilizing 4G services, we can now consolidate these into a single device, giving deputies access to email at all times while also throwing in camera capabilities and on top of all of that around \$16 in savings per phone per month. With thirteen cell phones at use in our Sheriff's office right now, that's a total savings of approximately \$2496 per year.

Cell  
Phones:



### Bitdefender Cloud Antivirus

In an environment where multiple offices are on different networks and at different sites, moving to a cloud-based antivirus has been a great shift. Machines at multiple sites can now be monitored from a single web dashboard that I can access from anywhere.

### Domain Infrastructure

A network "domain" is a type of network architecture by which user accounts, security settings and other configurations are able to be managed centrally. This means rather than configuring individual computers and accounts on those computers, the entire network can be managed on a domain controller. This is considered a best practice in the enterprise world.

Multiple offices were added to this domain infrastructure this year. A few servers and the Supervisor of Assessments Office were previously added. Now the domain also includes the County Administrator's Office, Treasurer's Office, the State's Attorney and most of the County Clerk's Office. Implementing new software, as was the case with our Devnet tax software, is a much smoother process with a domain infrastructure in place.

### Unique Logons

While implementing the domain infrastructure, I've been moving staff over to unique logons. There was a time when most county equipment had either no passwords or shared passwords but we are slowly moving to an enterprise where everyone will have their own accounts and passwords that will not be

shared. This is another best practice that provides for greater security and accountability for Union County's IT systems.

#### Stamps.com

Recommended by the Treasurer a couple years ago and initially adopted in the State's Attorney's office, Stamps.com has now been adopted in several Union County offices. This has allowed for a smooth transition to centralizing postage expenses in the current budget and much more accurate reporting. Many thanks are due to our County Administrator for making this transition a priority. By eliminating postage meter leases and trips to the post office, this is resulting in thousands of dollars in savings per year in several offices.



#### Multiple Software and Vendor Changes

When I first started providing consulting for Union County four years ago, this was a very vendor-centric organization. Bringing up the possibility of changing some existing relationships was not a popular thing to do and often resulted in awkward phone calls. Today, the way we interact with most vendors is more healthy.

Whether it is a change in a vendor and software that I have been heavily involved in like Devnet or changes made more directly by other offices such as implementing Paychex for our payroll system or Intacct for our accounts payable and general ledger, this willingness to challenge vendors to outwork each other in pricing and services is the culmination of what I and a few others in our organization have been trying to foster for years. The fact that we are able and willing to shop around and keep contracts short will serve the taxpayers of Union County for years to come.

#### Dashboard Video Recording System

In partnership with Dispatcher Anthony Pena, I was able to deploy a server for retrieving video from dashboard cameras in vehicles. Mostly maintained by Mr. Pena at this point, I was able to assist with the wireless setup as well and finishing the ends of the cable he ran to the antenna array.

#### New Workstations Deployed

Now that we are implementing deliberate planning for cycling through equipment, we have been able to upgrade many offices by deploying new workstations over the last twelve months.

- A new vote tabulation machine
- Three new laptops in the State's Attorney's Office
- Five new laptops in the Sheriff's Office
- One new counter PC in the Supervisor of Assessments Office
- Three new employee PCs in the Treasurer's Office
- Two new counter PCs in the Treasurer's Office

- Two new employee PCs in the County Clerk’s Office
- One new counter PC in the County Clerk’s Office

County-wide Energy Agreement

I had the privilege of leading the negotiations for our latest energy agreement. We ended up sticking with Homefield but without using a brokerage. Our final rate was 11% lower than the initial offer and 33% lower than using the utility. That’s an estimated savings of approximately \$3600 from the initial offer and approximately \$11,000 from the utility rate.

Freedom of Information Act

State’s Attorney Tyler Edmonds and I act as the FOIA officers for Union County. This is a heavily behind-the-scenes operation that we deal with on a daily basis and have had to coordinate with virtually every Union County office over the last few years.



We receive many FOIA requests per week and right now around one a week requires a formal response. They tend to arrive in waves as we’ll go a week without any and then get several in one day; many end up not being true FOIA requests but just requests for information that can be directed to specific offices. We’ve been able to keep the number of requests relatively low by continuing to push more and more content to our website.

We also have occasional appeals of FOIA denials that require a more comprehensive response to the Attorney General’s Public Access Counselor.

We are required by law to provide copies of public records or provide them for inspection and anything we can provide immediately doesn’t have to go through the formal process. We are required to have any denials available for review so the State’s Attorney and I decided the easiest thing to do is put all requests and responses online. In addition to being an example of good government, proper handling of FOIA matters is essential to avoiding litigation and fines. We also premiered a new digitally fillable FOIA form this year.

While I don’t feel as organized as I’d like to be with our FOIA process, I believe that with the State’s Attorney’s help we have developed a model FOIA operation for a county of our size. We work very hard to stay in compliance by meeting deadlines and providing records as requested while protecting the privacy of public citizens as directed by the law and common sense.

Postal Mail Issues

In October of 2014, it was discovered that there were issues with voter registrations, tax payments, bills and other important items were not being properly delivered. I engaged the USPS in two domestic resource investigations and they determined the courthouse was not properly registered as a postal address. I requested that 309 West Market be added as a registered address and that all mail, unless

otherwise specified, be delivered to the County Clerk's office by default. Since this change was made, I am not aware of any continuing issues.

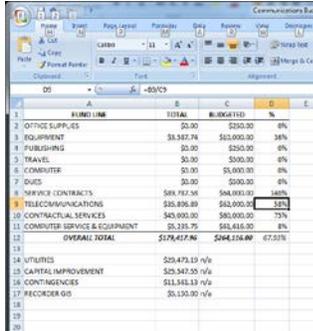
#### Live Twitter and Facebook of Meetings

Building on our effort for continually increasing transparency, I recently started posting live Twitter and Facebook updates during meetings when possible. Both the public and the media have expressed appreciation for this kind of engagement.

## Continuing Accomplishments

### Electronic Bill Lists

As we continue moving into the Intacct era for our finances, our electronic bill list will soon be a thing of the past. It's served us well in reducing errors and saving time over the last few years and has been frequently updated for departments that requested revisions.



	BUDGET LINE	TOTAL	BUDGETED	%
1	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$0.00	\$200.00	0%
2	EQUIPMENT	\$3,387.76	\$3,000.00	88%
3	PUBLISHING	\$0.00	\$250.00	0%
4	TRAVEL	\$0.00	\$300.00	0%
5	COMPUTER	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	0%
6	DUES	\$0.00	\$500.00	0%
7	RENTAL CONTRACTS	\$48,782.56	\$48,000.00	98%
8	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	\$25,836.89	\$23,000.00	89%
9	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$43,800.00	\$40,000.00	91%
10	COMPUTER SERVICE & EQUIPMENT	\$5,235.75	\$21,416.00	41%
11	OVERALL TOTAL	\$176,457.86	\$146,116.00	82.53%
12				
13	UTILITIES	\$29,479.19	n/a	
14	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$25,342.25	n/a	
15	CONTINGENCIES	\$11,343.13	n/a	
16	REORDER GIS	\$5,130.00	n/a	
17				
18				
19				
20				

### Budget Report Spreadsheets

Again, Intacct will eventually supplant the need for these individual budget sheets but for the offices that have utilized them, they have been a great aid in tracking spending internally. As long as offices want to use them I will gladly keep them updated.

### Media Interaction

We made it a mission several years ago to get the public knowing more about the good things happening in Union County Government. I would argue we have been successful in that effort. While we are sending out fewer press releases than last year, we continue to get consistently good coverage from our local media sources. We have built the relationships and established ourselves as a credible source of news. Over the last year, we have received a lot of compliments from both the public and the media for the amount of information we publish.

### Fiber Internet Services

Prior to our move into the new courthouse, the county was committed to a broadband and telephone service agreement that would have cost \$1400 a month for fiber Internet services. Before making the final move, I was able to help split this agreement between multiple vendors and negotiate the fiber portion down to \$700 per month. This continues to save us \$8400 per year. With dropping prices in this area, we'll likely be able to cut those prices in half again in the near future.

### Single Point of Contact

Over time, I have been able to fill the role of the contact person with many of our vendors. This not only saves hassle in individual offices but makes for more manageable relationships with vendors where they aren't being hit from multiple directions from the same client and can deal with someone who "speaks the same language." It also helps in identifying trouble patterns with vendors that might not otherwise be noticed.

### Insourcing

As the CIO role continues to evolve, dependence on outside consultants continues to be reduced. This is immediately a cost saving benefit but also gives Union County more control over its own future by being able to craft its own solutions rather than being limited to those determined by vendors.

### Vendor Relationships

As I've noted in the past, county governments are uniquely structured in ways that lend themselves to unhealthy vendor relationships. Though it is at times controversial, as CIO and in partnership with our County Administrator we have been able to establish a consistent message that we want shorter contracts, we want options and we as a county will not be pressured into making decisions.

### Cost Analyses

One of the things I've been able to bring to the County is costs analyses for large purchases and contracts. With the frequent encouragement of our County Administrator I am doing this with smaller ticket items as well. I recommend this practice be adopted county-wide as it demonstrates transparency in purchasing, a commitment to saving money and a willingness to keep vendor relationships flexible.

### Email Usage

Our email usage continues to increase greatly every year. In some ways, this has been a cultural shift in the way we operate as more things are written down. Using email helps us to be more selective in our words, more accountable in our actions and provides a record of what has taken place for the people who replace all of us in the future.



### Transparency

We continue to add more and more content to our website. This year all of the building permits from 2006 to 2014 have been digitized and uploaded.

### 24x7 Support

I have consistently made myself available to all departments at any time, day or night. I also handle almost all server maintenance after hours in order to avoid interrupting normal operations.

## Roles and Duties Filled by the Chief Information Officer

Below is a list of the duties and tasks frequently handled by the CIO and the approximate time spent each week.

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Weekly Time</i>
Processing communications, IT and utility bills	2-3 hours
FOIA – Processing requests, drafting responses, follow-up with offices, research	4-6 hours
Meetings with officials	4-6 hours
Calls from vendors, sales calls, demos	2-3 hours
Reviewing server logs, checking on backups, installing minor OS updates	2-3 hours
Updating website and social media	1-2 hours
Deploying new/upgraded computers	2-3 hours
Copywriting, proofing documents, press releases	1-2 hours
Creating new user accounts, initial training, etc.	0.5-1 hours
Troubleshooting workstation issues	8-10 hours
Troubleshooting server issues	2-3 hours
Board meetings – attending and preparation	2-3 hours
Replacing, repairing or troubleshooting phones (cellular and landline)	1-2 hours
Support in court or judicial suite	0.5-1 hours
Research	2-4 hours
Reviewing legislation, industry news	1-2 hours
After-hours calls	1-2 hours
Printer and copier troubleshooting	1-2 hours
Tax Software Updates	1-2 hours
Antivirus/security reviews	2-4 hours

## Goals and Recommendations for Specific Offices

### Treasurer's Office

As the Treasurer's Office has been the most vocal in its interest in moving away from a traditional fax machine, my plan is to start with them in testing an implementation of virtual faxing. The Treasurer has also expressed in a county-wide point of sale system and would be a natural asset in that pursuit.

### State's Attorney's Office

The State's Attorney has expressed interest in implementing a social media policy within his office. He has also expressed interest in tightening security on workstations. I plan to implement both starting there and, hopefully, implementing county-wide later.

### County Clerk's Office

The County Clerk has mentioned in the past that there are PC maintenance fees in some of his contracts that could be eliminated when renewed now that I am available. I am hopeful to be involved in any possible way when it comes time to renew or shop around on such contracts.

### Circuit Clerk's Office

The Circuit Clerk's Office has no existing IT personnel within the County. It continues to be my intention to offer my support to that office in any way if called upon. That office could also benefit from virtual faxing, printer consolidation and other potential cost saving measures that I intend to investigate for the County as a whole.

### Sheriff's Office

Over the last year, as equipment has been replaced or upgraded, unique accounts and passwords are utilized on most laptops. It would be advisable to do the same in the dispatch center though it's much tougher to make changes in an area manned 24x7. As there are many technological initiatives at the state and federal levels that will be affecting law enforcement in the coming years, I anticipate I will have a significant role in helping to implement them in the Sheriff's Office.

### Ambulance Service

As HIPAA has gone through a lot of changes in the past year and enforcement is increasing rapidly, I would like to work with the ambulance service to help make their operations as secure as possible. There are many new requirements in terms of risk analysis and vendor relationships that I plan to discuss with them in the near future and I will gladly help them to identify possible solutions to any trouble areas.

## Highway Department

The Highway Department is using an antiquated system for its internal record keeping and the County Engineer has brought me in to look at that system and look for possible options. Finding some way of tying their job costing and other tracking systems in with our new payroll system is probably the most sensible solution.

## County-wide Goals and Recommendations

### Printing and Copying Review

For an outside observer, there is no apparent consistency with how printing and copying hardware is distributed throughout Union County offices. Even if we already have the perfect combination, we have no data to support it. Some offices have only small multi-function devices. Others have multiple mass-production copy stations. We need to determine the printing and copying needs of each office and determine what expenses are justified by actual statistics in order to save money for other important budget areas.

### Broadband Expenses and Redundancy

One of the first projects I ever performed for the County was to determine how many carriers and conduits we'd need run into the new courthouse. Ultimately, we ended up with three different carriers. While cooperation and coordination in terms of Communications have improved over the last few years, we still have three different carriers performing multiple functions. While it may not be feasible to consolidate to one carrier for all functions, it seems a waste not to build some redundancy into what we have for those cases where one carrier goes offline for an extended period of time.

### Electronic/Virtual Faxing

Part of being responsive to the public means being able to communicate with older technology still in use. Fax machines are an example of this. However, just because one end is using a fax machine doesn't mean we have to use it, too. Instead, we may be able to convert most offices over to virtual fax technology. Some offices may need to maintain conventional fax for confidentiality reasons but others can make use of the savings in terms of work hours, equipment costs and carrier fees by switching to an email-based fax interface.

### Locking Down Workstations

As mentioned, locking down workstations for more security needs to be on our horizon. What needs to be controlled in terms of automatic lockouts, security restrictions, etc. is certainly up for discussion but the need is not really debatable. As most and more of our operations move to a digital format, making sure that access to change sensitive data by the wrong employee or by the public is crucial.

### Automating Updates

Updating workstations is a time-consuming activity but there are ways to automate it. By automating the process and rolling updates out slowly, systems can be patched with minimal risk.

### Social Media Policy

There are multiple areas that a comprehensive social media policy needs to cover for the County. First is official use: the who, what and how needs to be established. Second is staff use: what is and isn't

allowed in the workplace? Third is personal use: what sort of activities need to be discouraged while not in the workplace as bad behavior by employees on their own time can impact the liability of Union County as a whole.

#### Cell Phone Policy

There is a question in many counties about whether to provide cell phones and who to provide them to and what sort of usage of personal cell phones for official use should be reimbursed. All combinations of solutions are being implemented. We should establish a baseline for what makes sense here and enforce it.

#### Battery Backup of Workstations

Unfortunately, the area we operate in has a lot of inconsistency with electricity. Over the next year, I intend to put all County equipment on some form of battery backup. Too often, work is lost because of a 5-10 second power flicker.

#### Broadcasting Meetings

As we continue toward a goal of transparency, I would like to see us begin broadcasting all public meetings, whether in real time or posted afterwards. We owe it to the taxpayers to show them how business is conducted on their behalf, both in terms of county officials and members of the public speaking as guests.

#### Point of Sale Solutions

Where once upon a time there were many ways the County paid out checks, that has been streamlined. However, the ways we collect money still vary by office. Any combination of personal checks, credit cards and cash are accepted in different offices.

What if we had a uniform way of collecting money in our County offices? What if we could implement a solution that communicates in real time with our financial systems, documenting every dollar that comes in but also allows the flexibility of accepting multiple payment types?

I believe we should investigate options for standardizing the way we take payments and integrate them with our Intacct financial system. Other counties have succeeded in various forms of integrating in this way and we are well-positioned to follow suit.

#### Quarterly "Barometer" Report

I recently read a *County Barometer* report from San Francisco County and shared it with officeholders. It's a numerical snapshot of happenings in all of their county's offices. It would be wonderful if we could compile a similar snapshot of Union County. Ambulance trips, arrests, successful prosecutions, income, expenditures, etc. presented in a short report helps to tell the story of Union County Government that most residents aren't able to see up close.

## Conclusion

I continue to appreciate the support of the Board of Commissioners and the various officeholders of Union County. Our team continues to get stronger and we constantly push each other to get better at what we do.

County government is the most challenging environment I've ever worked in. Structurally, there is nothing I've experienced quite like it. It can be frustrating trying to move toward the future and to make changes in an institution designed, in many ways, not to rapidly change.

In spite of challenges and frustrations, it's the most rewarding work I've ever done. Knowing that my work every day is making Union County Government more accountable, more efficient and more effective for the taxpayers of Union County is what makes it worth all the effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathy Wain", is positioned above the typed name.

Chief Information Officer, Union County